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*The  
Proceedings of the Unitarian  
Historical Society*

VOLUME VIII  
PART I

*Tensions In Unitarianism One Hundred Years Ago*  
FREDERICK MAY ELIOT

*History of the Massachusetts Convention of  
Congregational Ministers, 1887-1941*  
CHRISTOPHER RHODES ELIOT

*The First Parish In Gloucester, 1642-1942*  
ALFRED MANCHESTER BROOKS

*Annual Meeting*

1947

25 Beacon Street, Boston 8, Massachusetts

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*The Proceedings*  
*of the*  
*Unitarian Historical Society*

*Volume VIII*

*Part I*

1947

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UNITARIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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# *The Unitarian Historical Society*

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The Unitarian Historical Society was founded in 1901 to collect and preserve books, pamphlets, periodicals, manuscripts and pictures which describe and illustrate the history of Unitarianism; to stimulate an interest in the preservation of the records of Unitarian churches; and to publish material dealing with the history of individual churches, or of the Unitarian movement as a whole.

The Society welcomes to its membership all who are in sympathy with its aims and work. Persons desiring to join will send the annual membership fee of Two Dollars, with their names and addresses, to the Treasurer, or Fifty Dollars for life membership. Each member receives a copy of the Proceedings. About 125 copies are sent to Libraries.



# *Tensions In Unitarianism A Hundred Years Ago*

By The REVEREND FREDERICK MAY ELIOT, D.D., LL.D.\*

"In the three hundred years of New England history," wrote Vernon Parrington, "the minister has enjoyed two periods of intellectual ascendancy: the first during the early days of the theocracy, when the commonwealth was ruled by the laws of God and John Calvin; and the second, between the years 1830 and 1850, when John Calvin was finally put aside and New England was in the way of being modeled in accordance with the plans of God alone." It is with this second period that the present paper is concerned—a tumultuous period in the course of which Unitarianism passed from its first to its second phase, not without dust and heat—a period of tensions within the body of American Unitarianism that have interest in themselves and also perhaps something to teach us today who are living in another period of internal stress and strain.

On August 2, 1840, John Quincy Adams made the following entry in his diary:

"A young man, named Ralph Waldo Emerson, a son of my once-loved friend William Emerson, and a classmate of my lamented son George, after failing in the everyday avocations of a Unitarian preacher and schoolmaster, starts a new doctrine of transcendentalism, declares all the old revelations superannuated and worn-out, and announces the approach of new revelations and prophecies. Garrison and the non-resistant abolitionists, Brownson and the Marat Democrats, phrenology and animal magnetism, all come in, furnishing each some plausible rascality as an ingredient for the bubbling cauldron of religion and politics."

A few weeks before John Quincy Adams made his comment on the young Emerson, another young man, named Christopher Pearce Cranch, was writing from Quincy to his father, Judge William Cranch, of Washington, in reply to a letter in which his father had expressed alarm at intimations he had received that his son was becoming "inclined to the Transcendental sentiments." The son tried his best to reassure his troubled parent. "I can assure you that my faith is as strong as it ever was in the truth and the divine origin of

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\*A paper read before the Unitarian Historical Society, 1946.

Christianity." Of Emerson he wrote: "His writings breathe the very spirit of religion and faith. Whatever his speculations may be, there is nothing in anything he says, which is inconsistent with Christianity." The terrifying label "Transcendentalist" he explains as "a nick-name here for all who have broken away from the material philosophy of Locke, and the old theology of many of the early Unitarians, and who yearn for something more satisfying to the soul. It has almost become a synonym for one who, in whatever way, preaches the spirit rather than the letter."

He wasn't happy, however, in the choice of a label, preferring the term "New School" to the longer name, chiefly because he disliked the implication of intellectual conformity which the word "Transcendentalism" carried. He desired a name that would "comprehend all free seekers after truth, however their opinions differ"—a name that would "cover all those who contend for perfect freedom, who look for progress in philosophy and theology, and who sympathize with each other in the hope that the future will not always be as the past." If he were to accept the label "Transcendentalist," it would be because it "seems to be thus fixed upon all who profess to be on the movement side, however they may differ among themselves."

Then he adds: "All Unitarians should be of this school, but I must confess that there are several of the Orthodox who more properly belong to it than do many Unitarians. There is certainly an old and a new school of Unitarianism." Thus, in 1840, the existence of the tensions within the Unitarian fold was becoming unmistakably clear. The precise nature of these tensions was not yet plain, but the alignment between those on the side of movement (today we should call it "advance") and those who were prepared to resist movement was becoming unavoidable.

Two years earlier, Ezra Stiles Gannett, colleague of Dr. Channing at the Federal Street Church, had returned from Europe, where he had gone for rest, to find the Unitarian world wearing a new aspect. He was one of the first to sense what was happening, and one of the first to take his place in the new alignment. His son, writing in 1875, puts it in

these words: "Thus far, no one had been more eager in the party of advance than he: henceforward he found himself in the party that conserved." If there was to be a new school and an old school in Unitarianism—and Dr. Gannett was one of the first to see the inevitableness of this division—then he must stand with the old school. For him it was no easy choice, but it is to his credit that he did not shrink from making it, though he must (one would imagine) have had moments of wondering whether his senior colleague was not really in the other camp. He was the great defender of "old-fashioned Unitarianism", and his lectures drew vast audiences to the Federal Street Church, where "sometimes the oil lamps went out before the audience," for on at least one Sunday evening the lecture lasted four hours! Seldom has there been a more stalwart *defensio fidei*! And in the 1840's the majority of Boston Unitarians were on that side, both laymen and ministers. Harvard College—always the best barometer of what respectable Boston thought and felt—bestowed its honorary doctorate of divinity upon Dr. Gannett in 1842, the year of Channing's death.

Channing had lived just long enough to see the outburst of indignant protest against Theodore Parker's "South Boston Sermon," preached in May, 1841, of which Parker himself, in a letter to Gannett, said: "If I ever wrote any thing with a Christian zeal, it was that very discourse." The famous upheaval within the Boston Association of Ministers, and all the other episodes that followed, are too well known to need recounting; but this event brought fully out into the open the tension that Gannett had recognized three years earlier. Here was the "new school" set over against the "old school" with startling and unavoidable directness. From this point on, old-fashioned Unitarianism was battling for its life, though all the future lay with the radicals. The "great embarrasser" had made the outcome certain.

An interesting bit of contemporary evidence as to the reaction among many Unitarians to Theodore Parker's religious and theological utterances may be found in James Russell Lowell's "A Fable for Critics," published in 1848, from which the following lines are taken:



"Now at Xerxes and Knut we all laugh, yet our foot  
With the same wave is wet that mocked Xerxes and Knut;  
And we all entertain a sincere private notion,  
That our 'Thus far!' will have a great weight with the ocean.  
'Twas so with our liberal Christians: they bore  
With sincerest conviction their chairs to the shore;  
They brandished their worn theological birches,  
Bade natural progress keep out of the Churches,  
And expected the lines they had drawn to prevail  
With the fast-rising tide to keep out of their pale;  
They had formerly dammed the pontifical See,  
And the same thing, they thought, would do nicely for P.;  
But he turned up his nose at their murmuring and shamming.  
And cared (shall I say?) not a d—— for their damming;  
So they first read him out of their Church, and next minute  
Turned round and declared he had never been in it."

If one reads the arguments of Gannett and Parker, the issue seems to be almost wholly in the theological realm—not the old issue of Calvinistic Orthodoxy vs. Unitarianism, but a much sharper issue between Orthodoxy of any kind vs. the essential Liberalism which had all along been implicit in Unitarianism but which was only now becoming explicit. Emerson's earliest writings had really told the whole story, but after the first angry and bewildered protests the conservative Unitarians had been lulled into a somewhat doubtful acquiescence. After all, Emerson was a poet! And it wasn't difficult to minimize the peril to Unitarian orthodoxy by laying most of the emphasis upon his queerness—his association with "phrenology and animal magnetism", for example, to use the words of John Quincy Adams. But with Parker, "the Orson of parsons," it was different, and only lovers of peace at any price could shut their eyes to the real issue.

In spite of many a phrase that cut down to the basic question, the Unitarianism of Channing had left most of his hearers with the impression that what had happened was only a reform of the content of pure Christian doctrine, based with complete confidence upon revelation. The significance of the doctrine of free inquiry in religion, of which they were very proud, was still hidden from their eyes. William C. Gannett puts it thus: "They were still sincere Bible men: Reason and Revelation were their equal watchwords." But the equality could not permanently be maintained. Even as early as 1819, Stuart said to Channing, "The younger men are really all out-



stripping you"; and not long after that date Professor Ware was "teaching that to him Christ seemed a man: the protesting note-books of the students show it." "The Orthodox professors were true prophets, when they said that Unitarianism would necessarily result in Natural Religion." By 1841 that outcome was terrifyingly clear. Parker might speak of his "Christian zeal", but he no longer held any of the central core of traditional Christian doctrine. Very quietly, but very effectively, the liberal spirit had destroyed the theology not only of John Calvin but of the early Unitarians. It had destroyed the theology of William Ellery Channing, though there are Unitarians a hundred years later who are still unaware of that fact.

Channing introduced the revolutionary idea, but it was Emerson and Parker who saw that it was by its very nature forever incompatible with any kind of orthodoxy. That discovery produced the first great tension within the body of Unitarianism—a tension which is still with us, still dividing us into "old" and "new" schools, still capable of breeding strong emotional reactions and partisan loyalties, for it "comes hard" to most men to "yield with a grace to reason," and in each successive generation there are those among us who want to believe that at last the process has come to an end by which new truth can be apprehended and comprehended only if we are willing to let go the old truth that is now no longer true. It is always painful to recognize that time makes ancient good uncouth, and perhaps this tension is one we shall never outgrow. Certainly it is a present reality in 1946.

\* \* \* \* \*

But the theological was not the only tension in Unitarianism a hundred years ago. What was beginning in 1830 has been described—again to quote Parrington as a "sudden re-awakening of the ethical passion of Puritanism that had slept for two centuries;" and it isn't surprising that it caused real disturbance, in which resistance to ethical and political change was more vigorous and vociferous than the protest against doctrinal innovations, especially among Unitarian laymen.

The classic description of a Unitarian layman in Boston during the earlier decades of the nineteenth century is found in Octavius Brooks Frothingham's delightful volume entitled "Boston Unitarianism: 1820-1850," and the figure that is chosen to represent the type is Peter Chardon Brooks, whose eldest daughter married Nathaniel Langdon Frothingham, minister of the First Church. O. B. Frothingham was thus a grandson of Peter Brooks, whom he describes in these words: "An admirable example of the Unitarian layman of that period, industrious, honest, faithful in all relations of life, charitable, public-spirited, intelligent, sagacious, mingling the prudence of the man of affairs with the faith of the Christian." "He was a conservative, of course, from temperament rather than from inquiry . . . In a word, he was a Unitarian of the old school. Dr. Channing he took no interest in, and less than none in Theodore Parker. Emerson on the one side and Abner Kneeland on the other were about equally far from his sympathies. He was no philosopher. He was no reformer. Political preaching was his aversion; and by political preaching he meant any kind of preaching that dealt with subjects in party dispute." Again his grandson epitomizes the mind and character of Peter Brooks in this revealing sentence: "He believed in Dr. Channing and Daniel Webster, and there stopped with the most stubborn conviction."

All this was typical of the great body of Unitarian laymen in the period we are considering, and it had its effect upon the majority of the Unitarian clergy as well. John Pierpont at the Hollis Street Church insisted upon preaching on what his congregation considered "exciting topics," and got himself into serious trouble not only with his own people but also with most of his ministerial brethren. "It was, in this respect, unfortunate," the younger Frothingham remarks, "that they had so many eminent men in their congregations. Such characters as Daniel Webster, Edward Everett, Amos A. Lawrence, could not but influence the opinions of those who lived out of the political and commercial world. . . . Saints might have withstood them; heroes might; but heroes and saints were few, and the city clergymen who could rise above social considerations deserve far more credit than they got. They were possessed of remarkable courage."

I am not sure how far it was a matter of courage, for in most instances, I suspect, there was very little desire to withstand the pressure of those whose aversion was political preaching. The impression I gather from reading the literature of the period is that most of the Unitarian clergy were happily content to stay within the prescribed orbit. They believed in Dr. Channing, but they did not understand the implications of his doctrines for society any more than they understood the implications of his doctrines for theology. Like Peter Brooks they believed in him, and "stopped there." Furthermore, they also believed in Daniel Webster, which meant that they, like Peter Brooks, were "conservative, of course." Life was pleasant as it was: why should anyone insist upon suggesting violent changes? It was much simpler and far less disturbing to stick by Daniel Webster "with the most stubborn conviction."

Let a single example suffice. A hundred years ago, the minister of the First Parish in Milton was John Hopkins Morison. He had an earlier ministry in New Bedford, but from 1846 to 1877 he served the people of Milton with a devotion and a reality of spiritual power that made his name beloved by many generations. He might well be taken as a perfect example of the finest kind of parish minister. The "Memoir" of his life, published in 1897, is as lovely a picture of a quiet but very effective ministry as I know. But that book never so much as mentions the name of Theodore Parker! The minister of the First Parish in Milton was, apparently, as oblivious of the existence of the minister of the Twenty-eighth Congregational Society as though he had lived a century earlier.

Not that Dr. Morison was unaware of the great social problems of his time. On the contrary, he was keenly aware of them. But he just didn't think it was the business of the preacher to come to grips with them. He was one of the committee appointed to draft a reply to the letter from eighty-five Unitarian ministers in Great Britain asking their American brethren to act "in behalf of the unhappy slave." The tone of the reply may be found in a letter from Dr. Morison to Dr. A. P. Peabody, dated March 2, 1844. After deploring

the obvious evils of slavery, he goes on thus: "But at the same time it is an evil which has sunk into the heart of society, and is so woven into the whole social organization that, while we all feel something must be done, our views as to the particular mode of action are perhaps almost as various as our names." One hundred and thirty Unitarian ministers signed the letter. They were not cowards, they were not hypocrites, they were not insensitive to wrong; but they were still living in a world that John Pierpont and Theodore Parker were determined to shatter.

Both Pierpont and Parker were aggressive, militant, dead in earnest. Neither of them was tactful or diplomatic. But in the First Parish in Dorchester, on Meeting House Hill, was a minister who combined an equal courage with an irenic spirit. Nathaniel Hall was, in my judgment, a truly very great minister. When he was sharply challenged for introducing politics into the pulpit, he met the issue squarely: "The pulpit stands before the community as the visible representative, the public organ, the accredited voice of its religion. Should it fail of bearing testimony, openly and unequivocally against this wrong, what would be the unauthorized inference from such failure,—the natural language of it? Would it not be, that religion, as such, had no rebuke for it,—had nothing to do with it? . . . Circumstances require that I should be explicit in this matter. This, therefore, I desire to say, that I stand here in perfect freedom, or I stand not here at all; and that, in the exercise of that freedom, among the subjects that will be introduced here, is that of righteousness in its application to the great sin of the nation,—to American slavery."

When some of his parishioners asked what good he thought such preaching would do, he replied: "I do not know; I do not care to know. Ask Him who formed the soul for truth, to find therein its sustenance and salvation, and whose kingdom is to come in the world only through his blessing upon the spoken and manifested truth. Ask him who 'for this end was born, and for this cause came into the world, that He might bear witness to the truth,' and who bore wit-



ness to it against scoff and sneer, the frown of power, and the threatening of hate, in the sublime faith that it would win for itself, at length, a universal triumph."

There were heroes and saints in the Unitarian ministry a hundred years ago, who spoke out and ran the risks that are inescapable when "some great cause, God's new Messiah" offers to a new generation the opportunity to choose between the evil and the good. Such moments bring sharp tensions, and the Unitarians of 1846 were as keenly aware of them as we, in a very different situation, are today.

Slavery was the overshadowing issue, but the fact that the moral question was basic in the discussion of that issue made the choice much easier for such brave preachers as I have mentioned. Once the real question was clearly perceived, men like Pierpont and Parker and Nathaniel Hall could not hesitate. But all through this period there was a movement going on that had wider implications and produced a whole series of less obvious questions where the choice was by no means so clear. It was, in effect, the arrival in New England of the Romantic Revolution—belated, as compared with other sections of the country, but no less upsetting for that reason. And the tardy arrival meant that the solid opposition to its dangerous doctrines was the more firmly entrenched.

When the Romantic Revolution struck New England, it was associated with the name of Andrew Jackson, and it had unmistakable political aspects. For a long time the ruling class in Boston had distrusted and feared and hated anything that could be tied in with the name of Thomas Jefferson, or the deadly peril of Jacobinism from across the seas. Even the word "democracy" was a warning signal. And now there arrived a new wave of assault, under the impulse of what the books call Jacksonian Democracy, and the Bay State reacted promptly and vigorously. Here was the old enemy in a new disguise; and the Lords of Beacon Hill swung into action with all the old weapons. The ark of the covenant was in peril, and the clergy were expected to lead the defence. For the pulpit to be used as a champion of the new revolutionary doctrine—even though it could quote Dr. Channing at every

point—was something very like treason. Here, I believe, is the real cause—if you like, the real justification—for what now looks so unhappily like timidity on the part of most Unitarian preachers a hundred years ago. Only Theodore Parker had the combination of gifts—courage, eloquence, and clear insight—that was necessary to withstand the full pressure of Boston's resistance to the rising tide; and even Parker could not have done it if he had also possessed the sensitiveness that many an equally idealistic minister found a fatal handicap. Parker was "a first-class fighting man," a Yankee crusader whose battle-ax no other parson could swing.

But that does not mean that the new revolutionary spirit found expression only in the hammer-blows of the minister of the Twenty-eighth Congregational Society. There were many ministers who shared the enthusiasm of the time, but had no stomach for the kind of fight that Parker loved. There was Brook Farm. There was the Chardon Street Convention. There was the clear, flute-like voice from Concord. Most significant of all, in some ways, there was William Henry Channing, whom Emerson called "the evil time's sole patriot." He may be taken as typical of all that was best, as also of what was so pathetically inadequate, in the Unitarian ministry of the Age of Jackson.

There has recently come to the Historical Library at 25 Beacon Street a copy of the short-lived periodical edited and published by W. H. Channing under the title "*The Present*." The first issue appeared in September, 1843, and the final issue was dated April 1, 1844. *The Dial* for January, 1844, referred to it in these terms: "Mr. Channing's *Present* is a valiant and vivacious journal, and has no superior in the purity and elevation of its tone, and in the courage of its criticism. It has not yet expressed itself with much distinctness as to the methods by which socialism is to heal the old wounds of the public and private heart; but it breathes the air of heaven, and we wish it a million readers." In the same month, Harm Jan Huidekoper wrote to his daughter, Mrs. James Freeman Clark, "I can understand plain English tolerably well, but much of what appears in '*The Present*' is written in Irving's unknown tongues, and those I do not

understand." And a few weeks later: "I received the January number of '*The Present*' and am as little pleased with it as Anna appears to be. Not that I have read it. But I have looked into it and satisfied myself as to its contents." Of the editor, Mr. Huidekoper wrote, "Is it not a pity that so worthy a man should waste his life in this useless manner? Contrast his writings with those of his uncle, the Wares, Greenwood, the Peabodys, and others. If it were not for what you write to me respecting him I should sometimes doubt his sanity as I do the sanity of Emerson."

Doubtful though his sanity may have seemed to some, William Henry Channing had a breadth and range of intellectual interest, a passion for radical social reform, and a gift of spiritual awareness that made him one of the most fascinating personalities on the American scene. He was one of those of whom the world—and Boston—was not worthy. Emerson's "Ode" tells the story:

"What boots thy zeal,  
O glowing friend,  
That would indignant rend  
The northland from the south?  
Wherefore? To what good end?  
Boston Bay and Bunker Hill  
Would serve things still;—  
Things are of the snake.

"The horseman serves the horse,  
The neatherd serves the neat,  
The merchant serves the purse,  
The eater serves his meat;  
'Tis the day of the chattel,  
Web to weave, and corn to grind;  
Things are in the saddle,  
And ride mankind."

Against all this, the younger Channing protested with an eloquence that only Wendell Phillips on the anti-slavery platform could surpass. His great teachers were Coleridge, Fenelon, Herder, Lessing, Carlyle, Cousin, Leroux, Swedenborg, and Fournier—Fournier above all. The contributors to "The Present" included C. P. Cranch, Lydia Maria Child, Parke Godwin, Philip Harwood, Bronson Alcott, J. R. Lowell, George William Curtis, Margaret Fuller, T. W. Higginson. The foreign influence was strong, English, German, French,

Scandinavian—but chiefly French. Here is Transcendentalism in full flower, and anything more unlike the Unitarianism of Boston's ruling class it would be difficult to conceive. This is the kind of thing that John Quincy Adams called "the bubbling cauldron of religion and politics." It seemed mad enough to the merchants serving the purse—mad and explosively dangerous; but it was very much alive, as were the early followers of Jesus whom the respectable citizens of Jerusalem imagined were drunk. But who, indeed, is wise enough to be sure of the difference between new wine and the Holy Spirit?

At any rate, "*The Present*" very quickly disappeared, for its "million readers" proved a bit of wishful thinking, and its editor turned to the less hazardous task of preparing a Memoir of his great uncle. But "*The Dial*" disappeared at the same time. The world was not ready for either of them, and perhaps never will be; and even the name of William Henry Channing is known to few today. Nevertheless, he was a part of the expanding life of Unitarianism during the period we have been considering, and his contribution to the growing idealism of America may easily be underestimated. In several directions he was a true prophet of Unitarian Advance, and one cannot help wishing that he could have known how many of his successors on the left wing of the Unitarian fellowship would have echoed his voice. We may still be a long way from knowing the precise methods by which the age-old dream of a kingdom of God on earth is to be achieved, but we can still find inspiration in the valor and vivacity, the purity and elevation, of his testimony to the eternal worth of dreaming dreams. His spirit still breathes the air of heaven. If we still repeat Emerson's question, "What boots thy zeal, O glowing friend?" it is because the tension between "things" and "ideals" is still with us, as it doubtless will be to the end of the chapter.

F. M. E.



# *History of the Massachusetts Convention of Congregational Ministers*

*From 1887 to 1941*

By the REVEREND CHRISTOPHER RHODES ELIOT, LL.D.

There are three sketches of the origin and history of the Convention in print.\*

1. The first is to be found as an appendix to a sermon preached by Rev. Peter Thacher in 1795 before the Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society, and credited to "one who is not a member," supposed by some to have been the late Governor Sullivan. This is very brief.

2. The second is "An Historical Sketch of the Convention of Congregational Ministers, with an account of its funds, its connection with the Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society, and its rules and regulations" printed for the convention in 1821, by Hilliard and Metcalf, Cambridge. It is supposed to have been written by Rev. Charles Lowell, minister of the West Church, Boston, a liberal, though not calling himself, at that date, a Unitarian.

It includes a list of the preachers at the annual meetings of the Convention from 1722 to 1820. Copies may be found in the libraries of the Massachusetts Historical Society, the Boston Athenaeum, the Harvard Divinity School, and the American Unitarian Association.

On the Massachusetts Historical Society's copy is a manuscript note signed J. P. (John Pierce) as follows: "According to Dr. Sewall's journal, it was voted, 26 May 1720, that a sermon should be preached annually to the ministers on the day following the Election. Accordingly Dr. Increase Mather was chosen first preacher; Rev. Soloman Stoddard, second; Dr. Cotton Mather, third; 1721: Increase Mather D.D., Rev. 1, 20. The first regular sermon." J. P.

The printed list however begins with the name of John Sherman, 1682, but this is doubted by "J. P." Increase Mather's text was Rev. 1, 20: "The mysteries of the seven stars

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\*The history of the Massachusetts Convention is to be found in the Record Books contained in a tin box kept in the vaults of the American Unitarian Association, 25 Beacon Street, Boston.

The records begin with the year 1748 and continue to the present time.

which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."

3. The third sketch is the "Historical Sermon" preached before the Convention at its annual meeting in Park Street Church, Boston, on May 26, 1887, by Rev. John W. Harding, pastor of the First Church of Christ in Longmeadow, Mass. The printed sermon is followed by an appendix of 33 pages, containing lists of officers and preachers from 1721 to 1887, and much historical material of interest.

The lists themselves are of interest. That of the preachers, beginning with John Sherman of Watertown, 1682, (doubtful) and omitting Increase Mather, 1721, an error, ends with the name of John W. Harding himself, 1887. There are 153 names on the list and 15 missing, making a total of 168. It was customary to have the sermons printed, and many of them may be found in the libraries of Boston or Cambridge. The "texts" are given in the printed list and a note tells us that "the discourse has always been considered, not as a mere Charity Sermon, but as a *Concio ad clerum*."

During this period of 166 years there had been seventeen treasurers, of whom nine were Unitarians, and 31 Scribes beginning with Mather Byles and including Jonathan Mayhew, Andrew Eliot, Jedediah Morse, John Pierce, John Codman, and B. F. Hamilton.

The written records of the Convention begin with that of the annual meeting of May 25, 1748, but it is evident that the organization had been in existence before that, as the minutes of the previous annual meeting were read, and also a financial report. Matthew Byles was elected Scribe; a vote of thanks given to the treasurer; and the adjournment was to the parsonage of Dr. Sewall for a social entertainment, the same Dr. Sewall from whose journal Dr. John Pierce's quotation regarding the election of preacher for 1721 was gleaned. From Gov. Winthrop's Journal, as far back as 1633, we know that "the ministers in the Bay and Sagas did meet, once a fortnight, at one of their houses by course, where questions of moment were debated;" and other early records testify to

annual meetings of the ministers "on Election week;" and in Mather's *Magnalia* are references to a "general convention" of ministers; but there seems to be no reason to trace the "Convention of Congregational Ministers" to these except in a very general way.\*

In the appendix of the Harding pamphlets may be found the following items of historical importance:

1. Excerpts from the earlier pamphlet printed in 1821, illustrating the interest of the Convention in State and National affairs, in the "Protestant Reformed Churches, at home and abroad," especially in England, and the Southern States. Questions of ministerial duties and church discipline were seriously considered and urged upon the Associations, in view of the alarming prevalence of infidelity and immorality, exhorting them to vigilance and activity. In 1804 came the proposition to organize a "General Association," which later was negatived by the Convention, but from which came the withdrawal of the Orthodox members of the Boston Association, under the leadership of Jedediah Morse, and the forming of the Suffolk Associations, North and South.

2. An "Address" made by the Convention to the Provincial Congress and signed by President Langdon, Moderator, May 31, 1775, offering "our services to the public, and to signify our readiness, with the consent of our several congregations, to officiate by rotation, as Chaplains in the Army."

3. The Rules of the Convention, concerning membership; parliamentary procedure; duties of officers; and the distribution of its charitable funds.

4. The full report of a Committee appointed by the Convention on May 9, 1834, concerning the origin and progress of the charitable funds of this Convention and also of the fund of the Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society.

\*Cf. Harding's Sermon of May 26, 1887, pp.4-6, as follows:

"The origin of the Convention is somewhat obscure. Its permanent records begin May 25, 1748. . . . The Convention had evidently become by this time a standing institution. . . . The first Convention sermon that we have certain knowledge of was preached by Rev. John Sherman, of Watertown in 1682."

Nevertheless Harding registers no Convention sermon between 1682 and 1722, a period of forty years. The probability is that the term "Convention" was in general use from 1640 on, through the century, for political and religious meetings, e. g. the "Convention of the Colony," the "General Conventions" of Magistrates, or Ministers, but that the "Convention of Congregational Ministers" was not organized and recognized as such until early in the eighteenth century.

This report gives the story of monies collected or received as gifts and distributed among "indigent ministers and societies," and later to ministers' widows and their children, by the Convention, up to the year 1786, when the "Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society" was organized for an identical purpose, and to which by vote in May of that year the entire fund of the Convention, was transferred, at that time amounting to £571, 1s, 7d. This agreement has continued. All monies received by the Convention have been administered by the Charitable Society, with the exception of the Judah Monis fund which has been held by the American Unitarian Association. The Convention fund is kept separate from the Charitable Society's, but the income of both are used for the same original purpose—namely to aid the widows and orphans of Congregational ministers. The Convention's fund has increased by donations and bequests to about \$8175. That of the Massachusetts Charitable Congregational Society is much larger, amounting to \$51,000.

5. The Monis Fund. Judah Monis was a Jew by birth, who had embraced the Christian religion. He was a Hebrew instructor at Harvard College. He died in 1764 leaving all he had, in trust, for the Convention, to five ministers, Nathaniel Appleton, Ebenezer Gay, John Martyn Andrew Eliot, and Thomas Barnard, the income to be used "for the relief of poor widows of ministers of Christ in the province." His estate amounted to £111, 16s, 8d, and the fund is today \$400. The income is given each year to four deserving widows in equal amounts.

6. A report of a Special Committee appointed by the Convention to consider "improving or dissolving the Convention." The committee consisted of G. W. Blagden, Boston; John Todd, Pittsfield; S. K. Lothrop, Boston; Seth Sweetser, Worcester; Rufus Ellis, Boston; Edwin G. Adams, Templeton; James H. Means, Dorchester; and its report was presented at the annual meeting of the Convention held on May 29, 1872.

This was an able report, liberal in spirit, clearly recognizing the wide differences in theological views among the members of the Convention, but discerning also a deep religious faith and goodwill which should make for continuing



brotherhood and unity. It emphasized the idea of the congregational polity as true and the bond of union in each church and in the Convention as a whole. From its very beginning there had been "varieties of belief and opinion" respecting religious doctrines. Some were Arminians, others Calvinists, as in later times some have been Unitarians, and others Trinitarians. But they were all Congregationalists. Without holding that any form of church government was of absolute Divine authority, they all firmly believed that the first source of ecclesiastical power was in the brethren of each church . . . and they held that each church was subject to no control over its own procedure, in word, doctrine, or government, from any body without itself. . . . While the nature of their public service was mainly congregational and charitable, . . . it was to an extent also doctrinal. So that their yearly discussions sometimes took the form of what has been called a *concio ad clerum*, in which doctrines were discussed . . . in all of them the speakers and hearers were, as now, Congregationalists; striving professedly to speak the truth in love.

"In these religious services and discourses, the widows and orphans were not forgotten."

The Report strongly urged the importance of upholding this basic principle of congregationalism, not only as in the systems of worship and church government, but in civil government, both State and Federal, and in all social affairs. It was a watchful interest for "liberty of conscience and freedom of faith and practice." "Even the inconvenience of our system," it affirmed, "considered as the occasions of our discipline, in the Christian virtues of patience, forbearance, and long suffering, are its high recommendation." The Report goes on to say: "There is a strong tendency among us now to reduce the evidences of Christian character and terms of communion to the simplest elements of repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ." . . . "There is ground for reasonable hope that the great essential truths of the Gospel in respect to which we have differed may be so simply stated that we may, as we have not of late, walk much more nearly together, and be agreed in the work of our common Lord."

The conclusion was, that the Committee recommended "that the Massachusetts Convention of Congregational Ministers be not dissolved; and that as a means of making its annual meetings and general action more efficient, its members cherish in their preaching and practice the spirit of union and effort for making known and advancing our principles as Congregationalists;" and they asked leave to continue their deliberations during the coming year, to report progress at the next annual meeting.

The significant point in the Report of the Committee was its setting aside all the controversial theological differences which existed in the membership of the Convention and were probably responsible for the question raised as to dissolving the Convention, and making clear to everyone that the foundation is its bond of union—its central principle—was "Congregationalism."

Reading the Life of Jedediah Morse and a lecture by W. W. Fenn upon "The Great Schism," in which he reviews the period from 1800 to 1825, years of intense controversy, led by the Old Calvinists, the Hopkinsians, and the Liberal Calvinists, resulting finally in the Schism, it became more and more amazing that the Massachusetts Convention never was led into it—never adopted a creed—nor any test nor ever used in its title the word Trinitarian—nor surrendered to Jedediah Morse.

#### 1887 - 1941

The Convention has held its annual meetings regularly since 1887. The business meetings, until 1913 were held, on the day previous, in the Boston Supreme Judicial Court Room; after that date, in the Congregational House, or at the Unitarian Headquarters; but later in the various churches, preceding the annual public meetings.

The custom of having only one preacher at each public meeting was continued until 1905 when, by a vote passed at the business meeting of the previous year, it was decided to have two addresses each year, one by a representative minister from the Trinitarian Congregationalists and one from the Unitarians. Both branches were recognized also in the religious services.

This plan continued until 1937 when the Convention returned to its original plan of having a Moderator, one preacher, and others for the Service.

The list of preachers\* or speakers follows:

#### LIST OF PREACHERS, 1888-1904

- 1888 Rev. Henry J. Patrick, West Newton
- 1889 Rev. David Gregg
- 1890 Rev. James DeNormandie, D.D., Roxbury
- 1891 Rev. Wolcott Calkins
- 1892 Rev. Bradford Fullerton, D.D.
- 1893 Rev. S. C. Beane of Newburyport
- 1894 Rev. George A. Gordon, D.D., Boston
- 1895 Rev. Archibald McCullaugh, D.D., Worcester
- 1896 Rev. Howard N. Brown, D.D.
- 1897 Rev. John M. Green
- 1898 Rev. Henry F. Jenks
- 1899 Rev. B. F. Hamilton, D.D.
- 1900 Rev. Edward E. Hale, D.D.
- 1901 Rev. Arthur Little, D.D., Dorchester
- 1902 Rev. Carlton A. Staples, Lexington
- 1903 Rev. F. L. Goodspeed, D.D., Springfield
- 1904 Rev. DeWitt S. Clark, Salem

#### LIST OF ADDRESSES AND SUBJECTS 1905-1937

MAY 29, 1905 — Rev. Paul R. Frothingham, "The History of Preaching." Rev. Charles F. Carter, "Duties and Principles of Preaching."

MAY 31, 1906 — Rev. John H. Denison, "Honesty of Thought." Rev. Benjamin R. Bulkeley, "Congregationalism."

MAY 23, 1907 — Rev. Albert P. Fitch, D.D., Rev. Samuel McC. Crothers, D.D., "The Historic Dignity of Congregationalism."

MAY 1908 — Rev. George E. Martin, D.D., "Progress Thro' Conflict." Prof. William Wallace Fenn, D.D., "The Ethical Insistance of the Mythical Strain."

MAY 27, 1909 — Rev. F. E. Emrich, D.D., Rev. Edward Cummings, "Church Unity."

\*For the list of preachers from 1682-1887, see the foot-note at the end of this paper. F. L. W.

MAY 26, 1910 — Prof. E. C. Moore, "Our Common Inheritance." Rev. Charles E. Park, D.D., "The Influence of Congregationalism on Our National Progress."

MAY 25, 1911 — Rev. Theodore D. Bacon, "The Practical Aspect of the Doctrine of the Trinity." Rev. Edward M. Noyes of Newton, "The Present Attitude toward some points of Ancient Controversy."

MAY 22, 1912 — Rev. John W. Platner, "The Service of Protestantism to the Intellectual Welfare of the United States." Rev. Charles T. Billings, "The Service of Protestantism to the Civic and Social Welfare of the United States."

MAY 26, 1913 — Rev. Howard N. Brown, "Some Unshaken Things That Remain." Rev. Payson Drew, "The Meaning of Congregationalism."

MAY 27, 1914 — Rev. Thomas Van Ness, "The Trend of the Times." Rev. Samuel Bushnell, "Progress in Theology."

JUNE 7, 1915 — Rev. Raymond Calkins, Rev. Roger Forbes.

MAY 22, 1916 — Rev. Willard L. Sperry, D.D., Rev. Merle St. C. Wright.

MAY 1917 — Rev. Abraham J. Muste, "H. G. Wells' Idea of God."

MAY 1918 — Rev. Samuel McC. Crothers, D.D., "The Purposes of the Church in the First 100 Years." Rev. Newton M. Hall, D.D., "The New Spiritual Democracy."

MAY 20, 1919 — Rev. Samuel A. Eliot, D.D., Rev. Howard J. Chidley, Winchester, "Our Common Pilgrim Inheritance."

MAY 24, 1920 — Rev. Theodore D. Bacon, Salem, "Persecution of the Pilgrim in the Light of Present Events." Rev. Frederick H. Page, D.D., "A Message of 1620 to 1920." (All churches recommended to hold United Services this year in Commemoration of the Pilgrim Spirit.)

MAY 23, 1921 — Rev. Abbot Peterson, "The Wholesomeness of a Minister's Life." Rev. Christopher W. Collier, "The Underlying Unities."

MAY 1922 — Rev. Samuel V. Cole, "The Spirit of the Living Creature." Rev. Albert C. Dieffenbach, "The Living Creature in Action."

MAY 21, 1923 — Rev. Palfrey Perkins, Rev. Vaughan Dabney, "The Ministry of Reconciliation."

MAY 19, 1924 — Rev. Addison Moore, D.D., "Precincts of Congregationalism." Rev. Fred. E. Emrich, "Congregationalism."

MAY 11, 1925 — Rev. E. M. Slocombe, Rev. H. F. Holton.

MAY 24, 1926 — Rev. Douglas Horton, Brookline, "The Idea of Worship." Rev. Henry W. Foote, "The Austerity of Congregational Worship."

MAY 23, 1927 — Rev. Boynton Merrill, W. Newton, "The Spiritual Nature of Man." Rev. H. E. B. Speight, "The Reality of God."

MAY 21, 1928 — Rev. Samuel A. Eliot, D.D., "Puritan Principles in Modern Life." Rev. Edward M. Noyes, D.D., "Puritan Principles in Conduct."

MAY 20, 1929 — Rev. Maxwell Savage, "Optional Independence." Rev. Ashley D. Leavitt, D.D., "The Spiritual Value of Independence."

MAY 1930 — Rev. Henry Hallam Saunderson, D.D., "Our Inspiration from the Puritans." Rev. William E. Gilroy, same subject.

MAY 1931 — Rev. Edward M. Noyes, D.D., "Whence Congregationalism?" Rev. Palfrey Perkins, "Whither Congregationalism."

MAY 1932 — Rev. Russell H. Stafford, D.D., "The Affirmation of Religious Liberalism." Rev. Simeon E. Cozad of Lowell, "The Responsibility of Leadership."

MAY 1933 — Rev. Charles R. Joy, D.D., Rev. Dwight Bradley, D.D., "The Free Church of America."

MAY 1934 — Rev. Willard L. Sperry, D.D., Rev. Dan Huntington Fenn, "The Congregational Tradition of Worship."

MAY 1935 — Rev. James L. Adams, Rev. Stowers Clement, "Freedom of Fellowship."



MAY 11, 1936 — Rev. Earl C. Davis, Rev. Carl H. Kopf, "Democracy vs. Authority in Church and State."

MAY 10, 1937 — Moderator: Rev. Herbert Hitchen. Speaker: Prof. J. A. C. Fagginger Auer, "Certain Observations explanatory of the Conflict between Church and State in Germany."

MAY 1938 — Moderator: Rev. Austin Rice. Speaker: Rev. Russell H. Stafford. "Congregationalists and Church Union."

MAY 8, 1939 — Moderator: Rev. Augustus P. Reccord, D.D. Speaker: Rev. Frederick M. Eliot on "Making Religion Contemporary."

MAY 6, 1940 — Rev. Charles E. Park, D.D., "The Congregational Heritage and Bequest."

Resuming the story of the Convention from 1887 to 1940, we are obliged to admit that there is surprisingly little of historical interest to relate. After the discussions and the important report of the Special Committee of 1872, with its strong recommendation that the Convention be "not dissolved," things had quieted down. The Committee was continued, but does not seem to have made any further report; and, as a matter of fact, the Convention seems to have lost interest and grown weaker. In 1875, at the Annual Meeting, Rev. Dr. Samuel K. Lothrop made a long and discouraging report ending with a resolution that "the Convention of Congregational Ministers be and hereby is dissolved." He pointed out that "both the business and public meetings had fallen into discreditable neglect." He pressed his argument, but no action was taken, except to refer the question to the next annual meeting—at which time it was again postponed. Dr. Edward Everett Hale became interested and offered resolutions; and a much larger Committee, and more widely representative, was appointed, with power to make plans for the future. Plainly there was a sincere reluctance to abandon the idea of a Convention which should welcome all ministers of Congregational Churches, of whatever theological belief, for the sake of the principle of congregationalism itself, applicable not only to church organizations but to social and political affairs as well.

Nevertheless, the Convention just drifted along until there came a revival of interest in 1890, when Dr. Edward Everett Hale was invited to address the Congregational Club at its Banquet on September 25, in Boston. The address was a strong defense of Congregationalism and an appeal for the continuance of the Convention as an organization to which both branches of Congregational ministers might belong. It was printed for distribution and reprinted shortly after in the Unitarian Review. Dr. Hale invited the Convention to hold its meetings at the South Congregational Church, where he was the minister. This was accepted and the meetings continued there until his death in 1909. In 1899 Dr. Hale proposed the following resolution which was voted and sent to the National Council of Congregationalists:

"This Convention, which is the oldest existing assembly of Congregational ministers sends its fraternal greetings to the International Council of Congregationalists to be held in this city in September and welcomes the Council to the State where the Congregational Order was first established."

"The experience of the churches represented in this Convention, confirming the wisdom of the Fathers, declares that truth, liberty and righteousness are best upbuilt by the maintenance of the original congregational polity."

In 1900, Dr. Hale delivered the Annual Sermon for the Convention. His subject was "The Pilgrim Covenant of 1602." It was so pertinent and inspiring that a few sentences and paragraphs should be quoted here.

### *THE PILGRIM COVENANT*

"Three hundred years ago, a few devout men and women bound themselves together for the service of God."

"It was in the hamlet of Scrooby, in the northeastern part of England. This handful highly intended to bring in the Kingdom of God together."

"They made a mutual agreement, expressed in the Scrooby Covenant (1602). It is in these words:

"These people, 'As ye`Lord's free people, joyned themselves (by a Covenant of the Lord) into a church estate, in ye fellowship of ye gospell, to walke in all his wayes, made known, or to be made known unto them, according to their best endeavours, whatsoever it should cost them, the Lord assisting them.' And that it cost them something this ensewing historie will declare. Bradford.

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"Their wish and plan was to make Heaven come to them, and those around them. And so they agreed—covenanted is the phrase of the day—that with this purpose, they would walk together."

Then Dr. Hale continues, "James the Fool made England too hot for them. 'I will harry them out of England,' said he, 'or worse.' And he did.

"At Amsterdam they held together. At Leyden—not one falls away from the Covenant . . . And so they cross the ocean together, and Together they sing the songs of the Lord in a strange land."

"It is not Brewster alone, nor Bradford alone, nor Standish alone. . . . It is the Covenant union which binds them so that they bear each others' burdens—each for all, and all for each."

"This group of men and women thus in their daily practice announced the central principle of life. . . . Not one man's prosperity or another's; not for any private greed or private comfort, but for God's purpose, God's glory, and the good of all God's children is this Commonwealth of Massachusetts formed: . . . Such is the germ of constitutional government."

"But our business today is the application of these principles in the affairs of the Church."

"So far as we know, they (the Pilgrims) were high Calvinists. . . . They were used to written creeds. . . . But they organized their congregations or conducted their worship with no such symbols. The preacher may state his convictions, but any elder may rise in his place and state his. The agreement is simply that they will walk together." "They cannot bear to be Separatists, or Independents."

"And why should you be separate? This is the great word of John Cotton—so far as I know (so said Dr. Hale)—his only great word. If different men can walk together, without one formula of doctrine—as William Brewster and William Bradford walked together, as Thomas Dudley and John Winthrop walked together,—why may not the Congregation at Roxbury and the Congregation at Dorchester walk together, as the Lord from time to time shall direct them? This is the plan Cotton suggested and which has worked to perfection to this hour. Two flocks, three flocks, six hundred flocks shall walk together. *Grege*—the flock—come together. The Congregational system is born."

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It is no wonder that Dr. Hale has been given the credit of having saved the Convention when, in 1892, he invited it to his church with that hospitality which his hearty voice, enthusiasm and personality, could offer so well, and when he eloquently recalled its honorable history and the fundamental, universal religious principles upon which it stands.

Shortly after his death in 1909, the meetings came to Kings Chapel, where again a hearty welcome awaited—King's Chapel, originally of the Church of England, Episcopalian, then becoming Unitarian in its theology, and familiarly known as the Stone Chapel, but consistently independent of denominational entanglements. The meetings have been held there since 1913.

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In 1909 and again in 1911, two Special Meetings were planned and successfully held with the purpose of bringing both Unitarian and Trinitarian Congregationalists nearer together, not in Theological beliefs but in control, understanding, purpose and goodwill. They were held on December 20, 1909, and December 18, 1911 celebrating Forefathers' Day. At the first the speakers were Rev. Williston Walker for the Orthodox and Rev. Samuel A. Eliot for the Liberals; and for the second, Rev. J. Edgar Park of Newton and Dr. Francis G. Peabody. The subjects discussed were "Our Common Inheritance," "The Pilgrim Theology and Modern Thought," and "The Pilgrim Spirit and Modern Life."



In 1915 new Rules and Regulations were adopted, providing for a Moderator, Five Directors, in place of the former Central Committee. A Fellowship Committee of twelve was established and the annual distribution of the Charitable Funds was left to the Treasurer and Scribe.

### LIST OF TREASURERS

1720-1940

Rev. Joseph Sewall  
Rev. Ebenezer Pemberton  
Rev. Andrew Eliot  
Rev. William Gordon  
Rev. Simeon Howard  
Rev. Oliver Everett  
Rev. Joseph Eckley  
Rev. John Eliot  
Rev. William E. Channing, 1813-1814  
Rev. Charles Lowell, 1814-1818  
Rev. Francis Parkman, 1818-1825  
Rev. Nathaniel L. Frothingham, 1825-1832  
Rev. Alexander Young, 1832-1833  
Rev. George Ripley, 1833-1839  
Rev. Samuel K. Lothrop, 1839-1867  
Rev. Rufus Elhis, 1867-1879  
Rev. Henry F. Jenks, 1879-1905  
Rev. Benjamin R. Bulkeley, 1905-1927  
Rev. Henry Wilder Foote, 1927-

### SCRIBES OF CONVENTION

1720-1940

Rev. Mathers Byles, 1748-1755  
Rev. Jonathan Mahew, 1755-1757  
Rev. Samuel Cooper, 1757-1758  
Rev. Andrew Eliot, 1758-1761  
Rev. Samuel Mather, 1761-1762  
Rev. Ebenezer Bridge, 1762-1763  
Rev. Ebenezer Parkman, 1763-1766  
Rev. Amos Adams, 1766-1776

Rev. Jacob Cushing, 1776-1779  
Rev. John Lathrop, 1779-1787  
Rev. John Clarke, 1787-1792  
Rev. John Bradford, 1792-1794  
Rev. Jedidiah Morse, 1794-1800  
Rev. John T. Kirkland, 1800-1810  
Rev. John Pierce, 1810-1820  
Rev. John Codman, 1820-1830  
Rev. Benjamin B. Wisner, 1830-1833  
Rev. George W. Blagdon, 1836-1839  
Rev. N. Adams, 1839-1848  
Rev. A. C. Thompson, 1848-1854  
Rev. S. M. Worcester, 1854-1855  
Rev. George Richards, 1855-1860  
Rev. James H. Means, 1860-1868  
Rev. A. H. Quint, 1868-1870  
Rev. A. McKenzie, 1870-1871  
Rev. J. F. Moors, 1871-1874  
Rev. S. E. Herrick, 1874-1876  
Rev. L. J. Livermore, 1876-1878  
Rev. H. A. Hazen, 1878-1880  
Rev. E. N. Packard, 1880-1887  
Rev. B. F. Hamilton, 1887-1910  
Rev. W. E. Strong, 1910-1925  
Rev. Seeley K. Tomkins, 1925-1926  
Rev. Vaughan Dabney, 1926-1928  
Rev. Edward R. Morris, 1928-1932  
Rev. Daniel Bliss, 1932-1935  
Rev. Manley F. Albright, 1935-1944  
Rev. Alfred V. Bliss, 1944-

### CHARITABLE FUNDS

In addition to its annual sermons and its influence, exercised in a variety of ways, socially, religiously and even politically, well described in outline in Harding's Historical Sermon of May 26, 1887, there was, from the beginning, a practical service rendered, namely that of assisting financially any of its members in need. Money was raised by collec-

tions at its meetings, or by gifts, and was used for that purpose by the Treasurers and Scribes of the Convention. This was done so quietly and confidentially that practically no records appear in the Scribe's or Treasurer's books—in 1748 a vote of thanks to the Treasurer—and in 1765 an entry made by the Treasurer of that year.

We know that until 1762 assistance was given only to "destitute ministers and Societies." In that year it was voted to include "ministers' widows and children" and the collection, which amounted to £4. 10. 5, was appropriated to the proposed fund. And so it went on, in a humble way, there being one bequest in 1766 of \$400 from Judah Morris, a Jew by birth, but Christian by conviction, a teacher of Hebrew in Harvard University; and one other of £50. sterling by Hon. John Alford of Charlestown, in 1775.

A committee had been instituted in 1762 "to render the annual contributions more extensively useful, and beneficial," but the most important event was the formation and incorporation of the Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society, consisting of thirty members, in equal proportions Clergy and laity, for the purpose of aiding the widows and children of deceased ministers. This was in March 1786, and in May of that year the Convention voted to transfer its funds in trust to this Society, "the interest to be distributed from time to time agreeably to the advice of the Convention." The amount thus transferred was £571. 15. 7d, but by 1834, when a special committee submitted a careful report (See Harding, Appendix), it had been increased by conservative management, to \$6,870.35.

The Massachusetts Society had by that date accumulated, by the generosity of its friends and by adding to its principle each year about two-fifths of its income, a fund of over \$51,948.42 which with the Convention fund and a special bequest, in trust, from Miss Anna C. Lowell, of \$8,175, made a total of \$66,493.77.

When the Harding Historical Sermon with its appendix was printed, in 1888, the income of the fund to be distributed to sixty beneficiaries was \$9000.

In 1941, the total fund had reached \$292,000, of which about \$13,000 was the Convention Fund, held in trust.

The income is distributed for the relief of widows of ministers settled in Massachusetts; one-half is expended for Unitarians and one-half for Trinitarians.

In May, 1795, a committee reported on the state of the funds held by the Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society for the Convention, showing an increase by donations in 1794 and 1795, to a total of \$6,829.87. "With regard to ways and means of increasing the funds, the Committee propose that application be made by a joint committee from the Society and the Convention, to the General Court to grant them a township in the Eastern unlocated lands." "It was voted that this report be accepted; and the following committee for the Convention was elected: Dr. Morse, Mr. John Eliot and Mr. Samuel West of Boston."

Several references are made later to this plan, which seems so ambitious to us, but nothing ever came of it. The Joint Committee, however, became active—"members of the Convention were urged to use their influence in their respective towns and parishes, and especially with their representatives, to prevail in the General Court to grant a Township of land to the Society."

May 28, 1800: Convention Funds \$9,945.98. Collection to be taken in Congregations in Boston and vicinity on "Convention day."

### FINANCIAL

Subscription papers to be sent to Clergymen throughout the state, May 27, 1801.

May 28, 1896. A carefully worded Resolution and vote was adopted, whereby all the monies belonging to the Convention, "vested indiscriminately with the monies of the Society . . . so that the precise product of each part cannot now readily be ascertained, . . . be selected as constituting the entire amount of the fund of the Convention intrusted to the management of the Society."



It was voted, that Hon. George Cabot, Theophilus Parsons and Rev. Dr. Morse be a committee of this Society, in concurrence with a Committee of the Convention to select the securities . . . and report. . . .

Whereupon it was voted that the Rev. Dr. Cummings, Rev. S. Niles, Rev. Ed. Foster and Rev. Dr. Kendall be a committee in concurrence, etc., etc. And the treasurer of that Society is requested to place to the credit of this Convention such securities so selected—and all avails thereof whether of principal or interest, etc., etc.

May 31, 1815. Report of a Committee on the Original Design, etc., of the Convention. (See p. 212-214, Vol. II).

The Convention has no written constitution. "We understand the design to be to promote brotherly love and religious improvement, as ministers of Christ—To act in concert in all matters of general concern (as far as may be proper for them in their ministerial character) respecting the interests of religion, and the order, peace, and prosperity of the Congregational Churches, and to hold correspondence relative to the interests of ministers, churches and religion"—

On this general design, they have proceeded "to assist poor parishes in supporting their ministers—to assist indigent ministers, their widows and orphans—to provide for the propagation of the gospel—to give their opinion on general questions relating to churches and ministers—to establish funds," etc.—(assuming no authority—only council and recommendation).

## CONCLUSION

Returning now to the year 1900, and the forty years following, the story need not be long. Reference has already been made to the fact that for eight or nine years the Convention met at the South Congregational Church enjoying the cordial hospitality of that congregation, and also to the equally significant welcome extended ever since by the ministers and people of King's Chapel, all of which points to the deepening realization throughout the membership of the Convention of a singleness of religious purpose and a unity of

spirit, which made possible a union despite of differences, a brotherhood inspired by a common relationship as sons of God and partners in the Eternal business of establishing upon earth His Kingdom of righteousness, goodwill and peace.

It is true that the Convention has of late years undertaken no important inter-denominational measures or social reform. It may be that the description of the Convention found in Williston Walker's "History of Congregational Churches" (1895) as having "a feeble existence" was then true and may have justification even today, (1940), but nevertheless the Convention has never been dissolved, and stands today as a living witness to the ideal of a Democratic Church, and if you please, a Democratic Government, a Social Order, a Federal Union of Nations, of which the basic principle shall be "Congregationalism"—the principle brought to New England by the Mayflower, set forth in the "Scrooby Covenant," of "the Lord's free people, joined together into an Estate, in the fellowship of the gospel, to walk in His ways, made known or to be made known, unto them."\*

\*Preachers of the Massachusetts Convention of Congregational Ministers, 1682-1887.

1682	John Sherman	1757	William Rand
1721	Increase Mather	1758	Jonathan Townsend
1722	Cotton Mather	1759	Ebenezer Pemberton
1723	Nehemiah Walter	1760	William Balch
1724	Peter Thacher	1761	Ebenezer Parkman
1726	William Williams	1762	Samuel Mather
1728	John Williams	1763	John Lowell
1738	John Barnard	1764	Small pox in Boston
1741	Edward Holyoke	1765	Charles Chauncy
1742	Israel Loring	1766	Thomas Prentice
1743	Nathaniel Appleton	1767	Andrew Eliot
1744	Charles Chauncy	1768	John Tucker
1745	Peter Clark	1769	Samuel Dunbar
1746	Ebenezer Gay	1770	Samuel Cooper
1748	Edward Wigglesworth	1771	Robert Breck
1749	John Barnard	1772	Samuel Locke
1750	William Welsteed	1773	Edward Barnard
1751	Samuel Wigglesworth	1774	James Chandler
1752	Small pox in Boston	1775	Benjamin Stevens
1753	Samuel Phillips	1776	Samuel Cooke
1754	Stephen Williams	1777	Samuel Langdon
1755	Joseph Parsons	1778	Isaac Morrill
1756	Hull Abbot	1779	Samuel Webster

1780	Ebenezer Bridge	1834	Samuel Gile
1781	John Mellen	1835	Oliver Cobb
1782	Thaddeus Maccarty	1836	Brown Emerson
1783	Daniel Shute	1837	Henry Ware, Jr.
1784	Joseph Willard	1938	Richard S. Storrs
1785	Phillips Payson	1839	George W. Blagden
1786	Moses Hemmenway	1840	Leonard Withington
1787	Gad Hitchcock	1841	John Nelson
1788	Nathan Fiske	1842	Milton P. Braman
1789	Jacob Cushing	1843	Joseph Field
1790	Simeon Howard	1844	Daniel Dana
1791	Jason Haven	1845	Mark Hopkins
1792	Josiah Bridge	1846	Alvan Lamson
1793	Thomas Barnard	1847	Parsons Cooke
1794	Chandler Robbins	1848	Ezra S. Gannett
1795	Henry Cummings	1849	Nehemiah Adams
1796	Jeremy Belknap	1850	Edwards A. Park
1797	David Tappan	1851	John Woodbridge
1798	David Osgood	1852	George Putnam
1799	Eli Forbes	1853	John Todd
1800	John Lathrop	1854	Edward Hitchcock
1801	Joseph Dana	1855	Samuel K. Lothrop
1802	Peter Thacher	1856	Seth Sweetser
1803	Thomas Prentiss	1857	William A. Stearns
1804	Nathaniel Emmons	1858	George E. Ellis
1805	Zedekiah Sanger	1859	Austin Phelps
1806	Joseph Lyman	1860	Emerson Davis
1807	Lyman Reed	1861	John H. Morison
1808	Daniel Chaplin	1862	Samuel G. Buckingham
1809	Samuel Spring	1863	John P. Cleveland
1810	Eliphalet Porter	1864	Cyrus A. Bartol
1811	Reuben Puffer	1865	No sermon preached
1812	Jedediah Morse	1866	Amos Blanchard
1813	John T. Kirkland	1867	Frederic H. Hedge
1814	Jesse Appleton	1868	Seth Sweetser
1815	Charles Stearns	1869	James H. Means
1816	Wm. E. Channing	1870	Alonzo H. Quint
1817	Alvah Hyde	1871	Alexander McKenzie
1818	Henry Ware	1872	Andrew P. Peabody
1819	Abiel Holmes	1873	Gordon Hall
1820	Aaron Bancroft	1874	George W. Briggs
1821	Elijah Parish	1875	Edward Everett Hale
1822	Zephaniah S. Moore	1876	Wm. S. Tyler
1823	Leonard Woods	1877	Rufus Ellis
1824	Thomas Snell	1878	Edwin B. Webb
1825	John Pierce	1879	Julius H. Seelye
1826	Charles Lowell	1880	Andrew P. Peabody
1827	Abiel Abbot	1881	Joshua W. Wellman
1828	Edward D. Griffin	1882	Joseph Osgood
1829	Lyman Beecher	1883	Reuben Thomas
1830	Heman Humphrey	1884	Brooke Herford
1831	John Codman	1885	Edward S. Atwood
1832	William Jenks	1886	George W. Briggs
1833	Samuel Osgood	1887	John W. Harding

# *The First Parish In Gloucester* 1642 -- 1942

By ALFRED MANSFIELD BROOKS\*

The earliest reference to the settlers of Cape Ann having "met and carried on the worship of God among themselves, read the word of God, prayed to Him, and sung psalms" occurs in a printed sermon which was preached by Parson Forbes in September, 1792. He names the year 1633. As authority Parson Forbes cites "an ancient manuscript" extant in his time, but since lost. That the hardy, English mariners who came, tarried and went, between 1623 and 1633, worshipped on Cape Ann is to be taken for granted. They were out and out, or partial separatists, mostly the former, from the Established Church—Pilgrims, Puritans; Standish, Conant and their companions whether in search of material betterment, or spiritual freedom, or both.

Not until 1642 was there on Cape Ann either a church, a voluntary association of persons owning theological principles in common under the leadership of an ordained minister, or any legally set-up local government. Both these things came to pass in 1642. The Cape, and a part of the adjacent mainland, together with the inhabitants, was incorporated by act of the General Court, and given the name of Gloucester. Selectmen were chosen, and a town-meeting government was established. At the same time there came across the bay from Plymouth the Rev. Richard Blynman with a little company of his friends. They joined those already resident. From the combined numbers, at most a handful, Mr. Blynman gathered the First Church of Christ in Gloucester, and continued to be its minister until 1649. Of him, and his works, Cotton Mather (*Magnalia Christi Americana*) says: "After a faithful discharge of his ministry at Gloucester and at New London—he went to New London from Gloucester—he returned to England; and living to a good old age, he who wherever he came did set himself to do good, concluded his life at the city of Bristol, where one of the last things he did was to defend, in print, the cause of infant baptism."

Blynman's church was the nineteenth<sup>†</sup> gathered in the Colony of Massachusetts. It was the First Parish Church of

\*A paper read before the Unitarian Historical Society in 1942.

<sup>†</sup>22nd in Massachusetts Bay; 31st in Massachusetts; 43rd in New England.  
F. L. W.



Gloucester and so remains to this day. During the early decades of the nineteenth century this was questioned. The question was fought out and settled in the courts. The unanimous decision of Chief Justice Shaw and his associates, 1831, makes this somewhat obscure matter perfectly clear. "The identity of a church is determined by the identity of the incorporated religious society (or parish) with which it is gathered, and such church, although a merely voluntary association, has perpetuity through its connection with a corporation which has perpetual succession," and "If all the members of a church should die . . . any number of the members of the same society (or parish) forming themselves into (a) church (by) such association would be the church of the society (or parish) identical with the church formerly subsisting."

This first church was Calvinist, and so remained through two hundred years when it became, what it is today, Unitarian. As Calvinist it drove our pious forbears to enormities that are, on one hand, unbelievable but, on the other, pale in comparison with the present-day, German love of cruelty. It was also congregational, ■ body of equals, every male member having a vote in church affairs just as practically every freeman had his in town-meeting. It was not ■ question of lower ruled by higher, members by a bishop, as in the Established Church against which Puritan and Calvinist took unrelenting stand. It was made up of equals. It fled England to Holland, and Holland to our shore, also directly to our shore, in order to escape religious persecution. None the less it did indulge in religious persecution once it got foothold here. Those are illuminating words Cotton Mather quotes of Mr. Blackstone, the (erst while) Episcopalian, who would join no church. "I came from England because I did not like the lord-bishops; but I can't join with you, because I would not be under the lord brethren." These words paint a vivid picture of a man who was determined to think for himself, and did, in the face of Episcopacy and Calvinism alike.\* None the less did the congregational idea embody the embryo of democracy even if "all civil and political power

\*Presumably he was a Calvinist, being an Emmanuel College, Cambridge, graduate. It was the Massachusetts theocracy he disliked. Actually he was ■ natural hermit.

resided in and was exercised by the church" in those early days when the church could truly say, 'I am the state.' Their complete separation had to wait for the nineteenth century. But during that two-hundred-year wait the right of a man to do his own thinking, unmolested, about anything in heaven or on earth became more and more a matter of general conviction. The acorn of freedom sprouting, and grown into the liberty oak we know, live under, die for, and rejoice in today. It is interesting to read the early records of the Gloucester church, and to follow the decline of its authority over its members as summonses for crimes and misdemeanors ranging from disrespect for parents to stealing and fornication go more and more unheeded, and confessions before the congregation grow fewer, and excommunication from the sacrament becomes extremely rare. It is the record of the approach to our time.

The First Parish Church of Gloucester,—ministering to the First Parish and comprising the entire Gloucester territory, with all its inhabitants,—as the mother of Cape Ann churches gave birth to her first child, the Second Parish Church, in 1716. This means that in the seventy-fourth year of corporate and ecclesiastical life on the Cape enough men had established business and families in the remote, westerly part of the parish to warrant their being set off as a distinct parish with its own church, the Second. The same thing happened again, 1728, when the northerly part of the Cape was set off as the Third Parish with its own church. By 1738 the greater part of the population, nine-tenths of the business, and most of the money that had centered about the first parish meeting-house on the Green had shifted to the Harbor, a mile away. In this year, 1738, the Harbor village built its own meeting-house which, by legislative act, was declared to be the Church of the First Parish, and the meeting-house on the Green, in its parish, was declared the Church of the Fourth Parish. Finally, in 1754, Sandy Bay, now Rockport, was set off as the Fifth Parish, which following custom and authority, gathered its own church. Thus, between 1716 and 1754, the First Parish Church in Gloucester had given birth to four churches. None of these births was easy because each involved important, material considerations although none

of these implied the least departure from Calvinistic belief, or congregational government.

The next two, and only other splits in the First Parish Church were splitups rather than splitoffs. The first was against liberalism. The second in defence of it. Both were due to the appearance of doctrines abhorrent to Calvinism. In a word they were the embodiment of the liberal, New England theology. The first, Universalist, centered upon John Murray. The second, Unitarian, centered upon William Ellery Channing.

Mr. Murray first set foot on Gloucester soil in 1774. He preached by invitation in the Meeting-House of the First Parish Church. Attacking the doctrine of eternal damnation he immediately became anathema to the orthodox and was denied the pulpit because he preached the "dangerous error" of Universal Salvation. But part of the congregation were ready for his advanced views. Internecine religious war was the result, fought in the courts for three years. Decision in favor of Mr. Murray, and his followers, was the rightful one, and the first Universalist church in America eventuated. A single sentence of John Murray's springs imagination as to the intolerance of Calvinism when, speaking of his Calvinistic upbringing, he says: "I often passed from the terror of the rod to the terrifying apprehensions of the future and never-ending misery."

The other and last splitup in the First Parish Church began in 1825 when the then minister, Hosea Hildreth, preached to the end that "a consecrated life was infinitely better than an iron creed," and set good works above credal belief. At once the orthodox in his flock sensed heresy. There were others who were ripe for liberal, theological doctrine. Internecine religious war again resulted. The orthodox, those who still acknowledged Calvin rather than Christ as head of the church, withdrew and formed a church of their own. This dispute, liberalism in the form of Channing Unitarianism versus the old orthodoxy which declared that it "stands where it stood two hundred years ago," led the new, orthodox church to claim the property of the First Church. The case was carried to the courts, and settled in favor of the original First Parish Church which, from then on, has remained what it is today, Unitarian.

During its three hundred, eventful years the Gloucester Church has had five meeting-houses, three at the Green, and two at the Harbor. The present house on Middle Street was built in 1828; its predecessor, on the same site, in 1738. During three centuries the church has had twenty-two ministers, seven Calvinist, and fifteen Unitarian. Some of its divisions left it with increased numbers on the principle that the more there are who love, the more love there is. Others left it greatly reduced. It has baptized, married and buried hundreds upon hundreds. It has consoled the heavy-hearted, and ministered to the dying. Within its walls our nation's victories have been celebrated, 1783, 1814, 1864, 1914, and it works and prays that it may celebrate the next very soon. The first temperance movement originated in it. The Lyceum, earliest institution devoted to the cultural interests of the community, came of it. Its insistence on the value of good works is evident in the town hospital and library bearing members' names, and in many a fund created to help those in need. By turn it has been town-house and school-house but always house of God. It first put into execution the idea of what today is known as a social center for young people, its own and others. For doing this it was by the orthodox called a club rather than a church. It has ever opened its doors to, and worked for war-stricken peoples—the line of the hymn expresses it better than national enumeration, "Greek, Barbarian, Roman, Jew." In fine it is the embodied tradition, the earliest evidence of Christian worship on Cape Ann and, as such, nothing less than a corner stone in the fabric of our national, civic and religious life. Hence the importance of the three-hundredth birthday of the First Parish Church (Unitarian) of Gloucester, in Massachusetts.

Ministers of the First Parish Church:

1642-1649	Richard Blinman	1854-1869	Robert Possac Rogers
1650-1655	William Perkins	1869-1878	Minot Gardner Gage
1663-1700	John Emerson	1879-1884	John Scott Thomson
1703-1760	John White	1885-1890	John Bremner Green
1751-1775	Samuel Chandler	1892-1900	Loammi Walter Mason, D.D.
1776-1804	Eli Forbes, D.D.	1904-1911	George Sheed Anderson
1805-1811	Perez Lincoln	1911-1915	Elvin James Prescott
1815-1819	Levi Hartshorn	1915-1923	Bertram D. Boivin
1825-1833	Hosea Hildreth	1924-1936	Robert Proudfit Doremus
1834-1835	Luther Hamilton	1938-1941	Harry Barnum Scholefield
1837-1849	Josiah Kendall Waite	1941-	Fred Rinaldo Lewis
1850-1853	William Mountford		

## *Annual Meeting, 1947*

The Forty-seventh Annual Meeting of the Unitarian Historical Society was held in King's Chapel, on Tuesday, May 19, 1947, at 10:30 o'clock, the President, Dr. Frederick L. Weis, presiding.

The record of the Forty-sixth Annual Meeting was read and approved.

The Treasurer, Mr. Dudley H. Dorr, was unavoidably absent, but his office reported a balance on hand of \$528.15, as well as the sum of \$500 in the Life Membership Fund on deposit at the Cambridge Savings Bank.

An interesting list of prized historical records, letters and general possessions of the Society was then read by the Secretary.

The President reported for the Publication Committee, stating that the present number of the Proceedings was being set in type.

The Nominating Committee, Reverend Harold Greene Arnold, chairman, and Messrs. Joseph A. Harwood and Henry R. Scott, submitted the following names of persons, who were duly elected to their respective offices:

Rev. Frederick L. Weis, Th.D., President  
Rev. Charles E. Park, D.D., Vice-President  
Rev. Earl M. Wilbur, D.D., Hon. Vice-President  
Rev. Henry W. Foote, D.D., Hon. Vice-President  
Rev. John Henry Wilson, Secretary  
Dudley Huntington Dorr, Esq., Treasurer  
Mrs. Martha Denham Watts, Librarian

and the following Directors for Three Years:

Rev. Dana McLean Greeley, 1947-1950  
Miss Harriet E. Johnson, 1947-1950

Mr. Gorham Dana was reelected auditor and the following Nominating Committee for 1948, was elected:

Russell J. Abbott  
Stephen W. Phillips  
Dr. John Carroll Perkins

The address of the morning was delivered by the Reverend Charles Gustavus Girelius who gave a most interesting account of the life and character of Francis Adrian Van



der Kemp, a Unitarian Pioneer, who was born in Holland, exiled therefrom, came to America and established The Reformed Christian Church in Barneveld, New York, the first Unitarian Church in that State, still active as one of our old reliable parish churches. He was a friend of Jefferson, Priestly and Channing. Van der Kemp died in 1829, at a ripe old age, loved and revered by the entire community. The account given by Mr. Girelius was enlivened by many characteristic touches of humor and pathos, and greatly enjoyed by all present.

The meeting adjourned at noon.

Respectfully submitted,

JOHN HENRY WILSON,  
Secretary

\* \* \*

Committees reappointed:

Publication Committee: Frederick L. Weis, John H. Wilson,  
Dudley H. Dorr.

Library Committee: Henry W. Foote, Robert D. Richardson,  
Samuel A. Eliot and the President, Secretary and Librarian ex-officio.

# *Officers of Unitarian Historical Society*

1901 -- 1947

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- 1945- Rev. Samuel Atkins Eliot, D.D., LL.D.

Note: The following list of members is as complete as may be gleaned from the records of the Society. Any additions or corrections will be welcomed. F. L. W.

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Historical Society*

VOLUME VIII

PART II

*Francis Adrian van der Kemp, Unitarian Pioneer*

CHARLES G. GIRELIUS

*Unitarianism In Maine*

CARLETON P. SMALL

*The Historical Background of the Present*

*King's Chapel*

HENRY WILDER FOOTE, D.D.

*Annual Meeting*

1950

25 Beacon Street, Boston 8, Massachusetts

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1950



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# *The Unitarian Historical Society*

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The Unitarian Historical Society was founded in 1901 to collect and preserve books, pamphlets, periodicals, manuscripts and pictures which describe and illustrate the history of Unitarianism; to stimulate an interest in the preservation of the records of Unitarian churches; and to publish material dealing with the history of individual churches, or of the Unitarian movement as a whole.

The Society welcomes to its membership all who are in sympathy with its aims and work. Persons desiring to join will send the annual membership fee of Two Dollars, with their names and addresses, to the Treasurer, or Fifty Dollars for life membership. Each member receives a copy of the Proceedings. About 125 copies are sent to Libraries.

# *Francis Adrian van der Kemp* *Unitarian Pioneer*

By CHARLES G. GIRELIUS\*

One of Francis Adrian van der Kemp's closest friends was De Witt Clinton, for some years governor of New York. Under the pen-name of "Hibernicus", in a letter written in 1820, he describes his first visit to the village then known as Olden Barneveld, now Barneveld, and his chance meeting with two highly cultured immigrants from Holland.

Clinton had been walking eight or ten miles from his lodgings with his gun and dog, he tells us, when he came upon two venerable men on the banks of a copious stream where they were angling for trout. They hailed him and invited him to join them, which he immediately did, and he found them to be men of the world acquainted with the courtesies of life. One of them held up a string of fine trout and invited him to come with them and "partake of the fruits of their amusement." He accepted on condition that he might contribute to the feast the game he had killed. He accompanied them, and soon they were in a small village, and as they ascended the steps of an elegant house, they congratulated him on his entry into Olden Barneveld. In the course of an hour, dinner was served, and Governor Clinton pronounced it "a treat worthy to be compared with the Symposium of Plato." He soon learned that these two new friends were immigrants from Holland, men of highly cultured minds and polished manners.

The elder of these gentlemen had been a clergyman in the Netherlands, and at the commencement of the American Revolution he became its enthusiastic advocate. In the struggles that later took place in his native country he sided with the Patriots. His friend held a high military office and he likewise joined the movement. But this uprising of the Patriots met with their defeat, and these two men with many others went into exile. This accounts for their presence in a little frontier settlement in America.

The older man was Francis Adrian van der Kemp, and the other was Colonel A. G. Mappa, agent of the Holland Land Company, and the house where Clinton was entertained was doubtless the stone mansion still known as the Mappa House,

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\*A paper read before the Unitarian Historical Society, 1947.

erected 1809. Clinton further describes van der Kemp's character and acquirements, his learning, his extensive correspondence with learned men in Europe and America, his recognition by prominent persons in our country, his title of Doctor of Laws granted him by Harvard University, and his great work in translating into English the old Dutch records of New York State.

"Thus, my friend," the letter of Governor Clinton continues, "I have made a great discovery. In a secluded, unassuming village, I have discovered the most learned man in America, cultivating, like our first parent, his beautiful and spacious garden with his own hands—cultivating literature and science—cultivating the virtues which adorn the fireside and the altar—cultivating the esteem of the wise and the good—and blessing with the radiations of his illumined and highly gifted mind, all who enjoy his conversation, and who are honored by his correspondence." (Autobiography, Francis Adrian van der Kemp, edited by Helen L. Fairchild. Page 185).

"The most learned man in America," that is high praise to bestow upon van der Kemp, and it may not be quite true, for there were other learned men in America. But it is not necessary to place this particular hero in a position of solitary prominence. It is enough that we recognize in him a noble character and a genuine greatness which are none the less valuable when others are esteemed as equals, or even superiors. In any event, it must have been a happy surprise for Governor Clinton to find in a village which was then on the edge of the New World Wilderness a man richly endowed with the culture and learning of the Old World civilization, from which he was an exile and refugee.

Let us now go back to the beginnings of this man's career in the Netherlands.

Holland was a country that was under the rule of the House of Orange, and it had enjoyed peace for a period of forty years, beginning in 1747, with the exception of a brief naval war with England in 1780. The rule of the stadtholders, as the princes of the House of Orange were called, was essentially aristocratic, but there was a rising democratic tide and a Patriot Party finally rose in arms seeking political reform in opposition to the Orange Party. In 1782, the States-General formally recognized the United States of America as a sovereign and independent nation, being the second govern-

ment in Europe to do so. The Stadtholder William V was driven out in 1786, but was restored in the following year through the intervention of Prussia. Holland felt the impulse of the French Revolution as she had already been moved by the American Revolution.

Francis Adrian van der Kemp was born May 4, 1752, at a place called Kampen in Overijssel. He died September 7, 1829, in Barneveld, N. Y. These two dates mark the beginning and end of a remarkable career, a very eventful early life and a very quiet later life. His early life was caught in the revolutionary trend of the times, and he welcomed and joined the rising democratic movement of his native country.

Van der Kemp was born in a family of distinction, and his father was an army officer. He had every educational advantage, but he tells us in his Autobiography that he was not a good student and that so far as he could recollect he never rose higher than the third in rank, and that his competitors for the first prize were always too powerful. Many of us have reason to judge, in spite of his modest self-appraisal, that his standing in scholarship was not so bad. However, fearing that the boy would not stand high as a student, his parents had him placed as a cadet in a company of infantry for military training, but without discontinuing his application to the Greek and Latin languages. After five years he gave up his military duties and took up his studies exclusively, and in 1770 he entered the University of Groningen and later the University of Franeker, with the Christian ministry in view. He applied himself diligently to his studies and now made a good record. His father died in 1772. This hampered him considerably, and he became dependent upon an uncle for future expenses. In 1773, he left for Amsterdam, where he attended a Baptist Seminary. In the meantime, he was having difficulties with his religious faith. As he was democratic in his political views, he was independent in his religious convictions, and he would accept no dogma or creed on the authority of any church. His creed must be his own honest conviction. This naturally led to conflict with some of his friends, and as his relatives did not approve his stand he could not call on them for his support. In his Autobiography



(Fairchild, p. 19), he has given us what appeals to me as a beautiful statement of personal faith as he derived it from his own open-minded reading of the New Testament. He read the Testament in Greek and on that study he based his faith.

"I was convinced," he wrote, "that Jesus came into the world to bring life and immortality to light, which was undiscoverable by the light of reason; that a merciful God required from frail creatures sincerity of heart and genuine repentance; that to love Him and one's neighbor was the summary of the doctrine of Jesus, the true characteristics of the genuine believer; and that it was the will of our Heavenly Father that all His children should be saved. I did not discover, neither searched for, the dogmas of Calvin, Socinus, Arminius, or Menno; neither cared much about these matters except in a literary point of view; and so and not further did I intend to pay any attention to them." This was advanced liberalism in his day.

He did have liberal contacts, for he wrote, "I had formed already many connections with learned characters in Holland, chiefly among the Remonstrants, and entered into correspondence with the Rev. Joshua Toulmin at Taunton, to whom I had been recommended by the Rev. Mr. Sowden of Rotterdam. (Autobiography, p. 16). A footnote states that Toulmin was born in 1740. "Baptist minister at Taunton, England, later a Socinian, and Minister in the New Meeting, Birmingham, 1804." In a letter to John Adams, January 9, 1816, van der Kemp wrote, "Last week's London letter informed me of the death of my oldest friend, Dr. Joshua Toulmin, since 1772, a guide of my youth, and since my constant, warm friend."

Van der Kemp was attracted to the Baptists at Amsterdam because of their reputed liberal principles, and they accepted him without imposing any restraint on his religious opinions. He made public profession of his faith and received baptism. On December 18th, 1775, he was admitted as a candidate for the ministry, after which he received several calls to churches, and he accepted a call to Huyzen, which he had received on July 15th, 1776. This is a rather meaningful date when we

remember his interest in the American Revolution. He gives us the text of his first sermon, I Cor. 10:15,—“I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say.” Here he worked among fishermen and farmers in a place located near the sea-coast, and he was pleasantly situated, but he soon chose more dangerous places for his career. On November 15th of the following year he became minister of a church in the city of Leyden. Here he met some opposition, but his work was successful. It was not his church work but his political activities and convictions that led to more fateful conclusions.

Van der Kemp was the bosom friend of Baron Johan Derk van der Capellen of Pol, who belonged to a noble family of high standing and whose annals reached back some seven hundred years. He lived but a short life, born in 1741, died in 1784. Van der Kemp esteemed him as a man of finest character. He was a liberal in his political philosophy during a turbulent revolutionary period, he joined the Patriotic Party, he chose a career of poverty in order not to be burdened with houses and lands, he befriended the cause of the American Revolution, and to him our country owes a great debt. He opposed the sending of troops to America at the command of Great Britain. At that time “no man was more talked of, more hated, more loved than he.” And this man was van der Kemp’s closest friend. It is not possible in a brief paper to describe the Patriotic uprising in full, but you are familiar with the rising of democracy in America, and it was the same cause in Holland that van der Capellen supported and led. Van der Kemp, now a clergyman in Leyden, threw himself heart and soul into the movement, so completely that at last he had to suspend his work as minister. He wrote,—

All the time which I now could spare, I devoted to becoming thoroughly acquainted not only with the history and antiquities, but principally with the laws and constitution of my country. My bosom glowed with the sacred fire of patriotism, and it seemed to me the period was fast approaching, if not already there, in which these sacred rights — long lost or neglected or made doubtful — for which the blood of our ancestors had been shed with such a profusion, might be recovered. (Autobiography. Page 41).

He fought vigorously with his pen, and at short intervals he published papers, some his own, some written by others — including letters by Governors Trumbull and Livingston of

America, dealing with the issues of the time. Some things he wrote he admits were ill-advised, but his influence must have been considerable, none the less. In his youthful ardor he threw away personal caution. "Many of my friends lamented that I went too far," he wrote; "I that they fell short." He added, "'Never by halves' was my motto; and I did not even suspect that anything feasible was impossible, if we sincerely exerted our whole strength for its execution." (Autobiography. Page 87).

One of his publications was the printing of an ode in 1780 in praise of a group of noblemen who opposed the government in Friesland. The authorship was not his, but the work of a close friend, Peter Vreede, who had then fled the country. A criminal prosecution was instituted against the printer, but in order to spare him—a man with a wife and two children—van der Kemp assumed responsibility for the publication, and the prosecution was thereupon turned against him. He was advised by friends to flee the country, but this he would not do. After vexing delays he was finally acquitted, January 28, 1782. He continued writing, however, in the same bold fashion.

It was at this time that he married, winning the heart and hand of Reinira Engelbartha Johanna Vos. The marriage took place May 20, 1782. The wife also was of a prominent family.

The democratic movement broke into armed opposition, and van der Kemp put on a uniform and joined the armed forces of the Patriotic Party, but the movement was unsuccessful, and he found himself in command of 120 men as against a government force of 1500. There was nothing to do but to surrender without fighting. For the time being, democracy was a lost cause in the Netherlands and he became one of many prisoners. He was released in 1787, but there was now no tolerance for him in his own country, and thoroughly disheartened he resolved to move to the United States. It has been estimated that 40,000 people had to leave the country, and among them was his friend Col. A. G. Mappa, who had also fought for the Patriotic Party. The Emancipation of Holland was years later celebrated by these same two men

in March, 1814, in Barneveld, N. Y., when van der Kemp read an oration at a meeting held in Mappa's house. No less loyal to their adopted country, they joined in celebrating the final establishment of Holland's peace in 1815, as recorded in the *Autobiography*,—

"Though we possess neither bell nor cannon we were not idle. I was invited with two Republicans and a Federalist to arrange our rejoicings, we convened, read the Treaty, wished one another joy, and walked in procession, about two hundred persons, and were cheered by a good band of music, all harmony, every house was illuminated." (*Autobiography*. Page 187)

But back in 1787 there was no peace for van der Kemp in his native country, no celebration, nothing but exile. From John Adams, then United States minister in London, he received letters of introduction to leading Americans, including Washington and Jefferson — the latter destined to become a close friend. Lafayette gave him other letters. I am sure you will pardon my particular personal interest in the fact that he received one introduction to a Rev. Lawrence Girelius, who was a brother of my great grandfather, and who was at that time pastor of the Old Swede's Church in Wilmington, Delaware. Van der Kemp described him as "a man of talents, who presented me with a manuscript on the origin of evil."

He arrived in New York City, early in 1788, with his wife and two children. They first lived in Esopus, now Kingston, Ulster county, N. Y., and there they remained for five years. In 1794, they moved to Oneida Lake, where they found life altogether too lonely, especially for Mrs. van der Kemp, but in 1797, influenced strongly by their friendship for Col. A. G. Mappa and his wife, they established their home in Olden Barneveld, and there they stayed for the rest of their lives. They now had three children,—John Jacob, the oldest, and Cuneira Engelbartha, both born in Holland, and Peter born in America.

The village, still popularly known by the colorful name of Barneveld, but legally designated Trenton, carries a name that is definitely associated with the Netherlands. Gerrit Boon, a Hollander and an agent of the Holland Land Company, was the first settler here in 1793 and he named the community after the great Dutch statesman of an earlier day, Jan

van Olden Barneveldt, born in 1547 and died in 1619. He was a great leader, and a man to whom his country owed its political existence, but the country became split between rival factions. The partisans of the Orange faction plotted against him, and had him tried and executed on false charges at the age of 72. The village of Barneveld therefore carries a great historic name, and it has received a worthy tradition from Holland. Four good Dutch names stand out in its early history, Boon, Mappa, van der Kemp, Jan van Olden Barneveldt, four men who stood for liberal principles, freedom and democracy. One of them was spared the paying of a tragic price, but belonged to this worthy company none the less; two were exiles from their native land, while one — Barneveldt — belonged to an earlier generation but left the memory of a martyred life.

Here, then, in the village of Barneveld, the van der Kemps were at last permanently settled. The house in which they lived is now, with some later additions, the Unitarian Parsonage, and they were among the founders of the Unitarian Church, as were also the Mappas. Van der Kemp's name appears repeatedly in membership lists, in letters written by him and in minutes of church meetings.

Of special interest is a letter written by him in behalf of the church in Barneveld to John Sherman, grandson of Roger Sherman — signer of the Declaration of Independence, to whom a call was extended to become their minister. We have only an unsigned preliminary copy, but the handwriting is that of van der Kemp. It is dated August 11, 1805, and I quote it in part:

"In calling you among us as our minister, we are unanimous; and have the fullest confidence that you shall, with the assistant of Almighty God, enlist (enlist) many among us under the banners of our Lord and Saviour, as we shall be confirmed in that growing affection and esteem, which now are warming our bosoms toward you.

"We expect, if our wishes are fulfilled, our fervent prayers heard, that you will with gladness acquit yourself of all the duties encumbant on a pious, active and vigilant minister of Jesus — that in every opportune season you shall instruct



us and our children — make them from their infancy acquainted with the value of living under the Gospel Dispensation, hear our doubts with patience, explain our difficulties with meekness, comfort us in our afflictions, and reprove firmly and sincerely our follies, transgressions and weaknesses; and you shall be able to accomplish the important duties of your difficult station, if God and the Father of Jesus bless your endeavors.”

Ministers are not usually invited to “reprove firmly” the transgressions of their parishioners, and I cannot help but wonder if John Sherman felt free to carry that particular duty into practice!

As the minister now serving this church, I confess that I have become fascinated by the thought that I am identified with the church that he helped to found, that I am living in his house, and that pieces of furniture reputed to have been owned by him are still in the Parsonage. I go out into the garden and I think of it as his garden, and when I work in that garden my hands are stirring the very earth that our exile from Holland cultivated.

His life, which was so exciting and adventurous in his native Holland, now became quiet and serene. But he was honored and respected, his fine character and his learning were recognized. The van der Kemps and the Mappas were the closest of friends. He visited prominent people, and he numbered among his friends such men as Jefferson, John Adams, John Quincy Adams, Governor Livingston, Governor De Witt Clinton, Governor Trumbull, and he had friends abroad with whom he corresponded. He did extensive writing. He visited Boston and took communion in Channing’s church. For a living he did some farming on a small scale, and he served as a justice of the peace for which he was given the title of Judge. His great single work was his translation into English of the old Dutch records of New York, and this was a most congenial task, but he received not one cent of compensation. It was a simple labor of love. But labors of love do not provide a living, and his income was therefore meager. In his Autobiography he admits that he would not have been able to make ends meet except for the support of



his oldest son, John Jacob, who became an agent of the Holland Land Company, and lived in Philadelphia. Though trained for the Christian ministry, he never sought to serve a parish in this country, feeling that his command of English was not adequate. He was a man whose actual achievement fell far short of the goals he would doubtless have reached, could he have kept up his work as a clergyman in Holland. The career for which he had been educated and trained belonged to his native land, not to a frontier village in America, and the world for which he was fitted fell from under him. He was a frustrated man but he rose above his frustration. He was a great soul, for a man suffering such handicap and living in such humble circumstances must have been great in order to win such recognition as he received.

It cost something for this man to stand bravely and wholeheartedly for the cause of political reform in his own country. Had his party succeeded all would have been well for him, but his side lost and he had to pay the price of defeat, as did thousands of his fellow Patriots. Had he practiced caution and avoided perilous speech and action he could have played safe, but he would not have been true to himself. He did win a higher order of success, the moral success of being true to his convictions. Think what would have happened to such men as John Adams, Jefferson, Franklin and Washington if the American Patriots had lost in their revolt against England. Imagine the fortune of these men as exiles in France, or Italy, or Mexico. They would have been great spirits in adversity, no doubt, but not the great figures they became as leaders of a successful revolution. Van der Kemp and his Patriot colleagues on the one hand, the American Patriot leaders on the other, all pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor. It is the pledged honor, whether it means defeat or success, that counts for greatness.

Van der Kemp's life could not have been altogether happy. He did not complain; he had resources within himself that gave him satisfaction. He had his friends, and he cultivated kindness and good will toward all whom he knew. "I would not care to run again the same course," he said, "but I have not considered this world a vale of tears." "I am not un-

happy," he wrote to his son John, "I hope I am not unthankful for the numberless and undeserved mercies bestowed on me, and yet enjoyed. I recommend you to my God, who will reward, for what is not in my power to recompense you, while you possess my love, and my ardent wishes for your happiness, and that of your dear Julia, and promising children. Adio." He was endeared to the people of his town "by his high Christian example, his unsullied honour and integrity, and his constant friendship." (Autobiography. Pages 194, 200).

The inevitable end approached, and old friends were passing away. Mrs. Mappa, dear friend of Mrs. van der Kemp, died in 1814. Colonel Mappa died in April, 1828, and Mrs. van der Kemp passed away on September 6th of the same year. Van der Kemp was soon to follow, with but "a short warning," as he had wished, for his health was good until the last. His son John had visited him in August, he had himself been to see his old friend George Scriba at Oneida Lake the week before. On the 31st he had written to his bosom friend in Holland, Peter Vreede, with whom he had stood in jeopardy of his life, forty-seven years before. This was to be the last letter of a life-long correspondence. "Now I must close," it ended, "I can scarcely distinguish one letter from another. Whatever may happen I know you remain unalterably my friend, as, so long as I draw my breath, I shall be yours. Once again, farewell." He died a week later, September 7, 1829. His minister, Isaac B. Peirce, conducted the funeral on the 10th, in the church he had helped to found, and on the Sunday following Mr. Peirce preached a sermon on the text, "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace." Psalm 37:37. (See Memoir by Isaac Peirce).

He was survived by his two sons and a daughter. John, the oldest, had his home and family in Philadelphia. The daughter, Cuneira Engelbartha, and the other son, Peter, never married, and they continued living in the van der Kemp house. Peter died in 1857, and after that Cuneira, or "Aunt Bartha," as her friends loved to call her, lived alone. But Sophia Apollonia, only daughter of Colonel Mappa, lived but a stone's throw away, and she too never married. Both

were born in Holland, and they were inseparable friends until Miss Mappa died in 1860. Miss van der Kemp continued her lonely way, for her brother John also had died, until her death on January 3, 1868, in her eighty-third year, revered and beloved by all, the last of the exiles who came from Holland years before.

The old Record Book of the Unitarian Church at Barneveld, together with the regular entry of her death and funeral, contains also a newspaper clipping pasted into the book, with this tribute:

"Her delight was in 'the law of the Lord, and the Courts of the Most High,' and never but from extreme physical weakness was her place vacant in the house of worship so dear to her heart. Those differing from her on theological points felt when in her presence how shadowy is mere belief."

I commend that final sentence. This is not to disparage belief but to show that "mere belief" is not enough. Belief must bear fruit in outspoken conviction, in character, in purity of motives, in kindness of heart that makes us good neighbors and in the willingness to stand for a high cause even if it involves danger. These are qualities that formed the personality of Francis Adrian van der Kemp and that were reflected in the lives of his family, for we must remember that when a man enlists in a dangerous cause his family must share in the sacrifice. This family has completely passed from the scene of Barneveld, but we have their graves in the Olden Barneveld Cemetery, and we who now live in this community have received from van der Kemp a priceless moral and spiritual heritage. This heritage does not belong alone to the religious fellowship which he helped to found but to the entire community, and yet it is peculiarly the duty of this church to keep the light of that life shining, especially in a day such as ours when the whole world faces crisis and when we are called to build a new world at the cost of danger.

"God give us men! A time like this demands  
Strong minds, great hearts, true faith and  
ready hands; . . .

Men who possess opinions and a will."

It was so van der Kemp served his generation.



Unitarian Parsonage ★ Barneveld, New York  
Once the Home of Francis Adrian van der Kemp

### *Sources of Material*

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*Annals and Recollections of Oneida County*, by Pomroy Jones. Published by the author, Rome, 1851. See Chapter XXII, on Trenton.

*History of Oneida County.* By Samuel W. Durant. Pub. by Everts & Farris. Philadelphia. 1878. See chapter on Trenton, page 534. Address by John F. Seymour, page 535.

Centennial Address by John F. Seymour, delivered at Trenton, N. Y., July 4, 1876. Published by White and Floyd, Utica, N. Y., with letters from Francis Adrian van der Kemp, and other documents related to settlement of Trenton and Central New York.

The above list includes only the authorities consulted by the writer of this paper. For full list of authorities see *Autobiography of van der Kemp* edited by Helen L. Fairchild.

# *Unitarianism In Maine*

By CARLETON P. SMALL\*

Exactly one hundred and seventy-nine years elapsed, between the first known religious service, conducted by the Rev. Richard Seymour, at the mouth of the Kennebec River, to a colony of planters, just arrived (Aug. 8, 1607), in the little vessels, "The Gift of God" and the "Mary and John,"—and the first authenticated Unitarian preaching in the ancient Province of Maine, by the Rev. William Hazlitt, in Hallowell.

The Rev. William Hazlitt, an Englishman, and a Unitarian, came to Hallowell during the winter of 1784-1785. Here, in the new Meeting House, he was engaged to preach for fourteen Sabbaths. One of the parishioners, General Sewell, very fortunately found this gentleman possessed of "Arminian" tendencies, and so Mr. Hazlitt returned to Boston. It was good for Unitarianism that this man was not allowed to be lost in the middle of Maine, for he found in the larger community, amid academic surroundings, an outlet for his religious beliefs. Here he assisted the Rev. Dr. Freeman of King's Chapel, in revising the Prayer Book, modelled after the form used by Dr. Lindsay in the Essex Street Chapel in London. True Unitarianism was thenceforth on the march in this country.

Returning to Maine, it is of great interest to us to note that on March 7, 1792, fourteen men banded together under the leadership of Mr. Thomas Oxnard, of Portland, and placed their names to an interesting document. This instrument, to be found in the archives of the First Church of Christ, the First Parish in Falmouth (now Portland), reads:

We the subscribers, being desirous of promoting the cause of true Religion; and firmly believing the doctrine which teaches the existence of One God only, humbly conceiving it to be not only rational but evangelical — Do hereby agree to form ourselves into a Religious Society by the Name of the Unitarian Society in the Town of Portland, and do make choice of Mr. Thomas Oxnard as our minister & public Teacher of piety, Religion and morality, and engage to pay him annually for his services in the Ministry, so long as he shall continue to teach what we believe to be the principles of Scripture & Reason, and we remain members of the said

\*A paper read before the Unitarian Historical Society, 1948.



Society,—the sums annexed to each of our names: and it is hereby declared that no person shall be considered a Member of this Society after he has signified his wish of leaving the same to the Teacher in presence of two witnesses.

We may note here that this avowed Unitarian Society antedates the church founded by Dr. Priestly in Philadelphia by just four years.

In Portland, an early territorial parish, the Episcopal Church had its origin in the ancient First Church, a place wherein Congregational-Calvinism was observed. After many trials and tribulations, mostly caused by the Great and General Court, this Episcopal Church won her freedom from the old church, which had been established in 1674. It is of interest to note, that Thomas Oxnard, the Unitarian, became disqualified for his Episcopal ordination, through his studies of Lindsey and Belsham, and his correspondence with the Rev. Dr. Freeman of King's Chapel.

The Oxnard society continued until the year 1799, when its leader died. Apparently there were none among the congregation to carry on the work of its ministry, but the spirit passed with its adherants into the liberal First Church.

The next step in the Unitarian movement in Maine came when this Parish Church, according to custom, voted on calling the Rev. John Codman to be the minister, on Oct. 8, 1808. This was rejected at a special meeting of the parish, 62 to 34. Mr. Codman was refused principally because of his doctrines. There was no real controversy over the matter. On February 27, 1809, the parish concurred with the church in the matter of a "call" to the Rev. Ichabod Nichols, an avowed Unitarian; and on June 7, 1809, his ordination took place. Thus easily did the ancient First Parish in Portland enter the Unitarian fold. Controversy instantly started, for the Rev. Edward Payson of the Second Parish in Portland, discovered Mr. Nichols to be unsatisfactory when examined by the Council, and so, of all the clergymen present, Mr. Payson was the only one to decline taking part in the ordination. By this action was the First Parish recognized as Unitarian.

The problem of just when the word Unitarian was assumed is not exactly clear. Early City Directories list the



church as "Congregational." By the year 1831 the word "Unitarian" appears, but, curiously enough the Quarterly Journal, 1855, records the installation of the Rev. Horatio Stebbins as "pastor of the First Congregational Society in Portland." Yet this church is to be found in the first Year Book, 1846, among the early churches listed by the American Unitarian Association, and gave to it its third president.

By the time the American Unitarian Association was formed in 1825, there were nine churches in Maine avowing Unitarian principles: Portland, Kennebunk, Belfast, Standish, Castine, Bangor, Eastport, Biddeford (later Saco), and Hallowell, the latter being the first Unitarian Church in Maine to use the word in its corporate name. Standish was the only church not on a waterway. Portland, Kennebunk, Belfast, Standish, Castine, Eastport were first parishes. Saco was a second parish. Of these original Unitarian Churches at the formation of our denomination, all are in existence, with the one exception of Standish, which was written off the records of active institutions in 1946.

The missionary movement is early discernable in Maine. According to the Christian Disciple, liberal thought was being expressed in Ellsworth as early as 1818,—though the word "Unitarian" does not appear; and it was two years later before the church was organized, under the able and liberal leadership of the Rev. Peter Nourse. On two occasions this church was to be closed. In the year 1851 it was omitted from the Year Book entirely, and does not seem to have revived for nearly a decade.

The towns of Wiscasset and Norridgewock both came under the influence of very liberal preaching: Wiscasset under the Rev. Dr. Packard from 1802 to 1830.\* While here, he gave much attention to education, and a private school under his guidance, soon became the Academy. Under his able leadership, the Bible Society of Lincoln County was formed, as well as the Eastern Evangelical Society. With the retirement of this energetic soul, the church returned to the Congregational fold.

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\*The Rev. Alden Bradford, LL.D., predecessor of Mr. Packard, was also liberal, and later was definitely a Unitarian. F. L. W.

Norridgewock, on the other hand, a Second Congregational Society, was very liberal at the time the Rev. Samuel Brimblecom was its pastor, 1826-1829. It was during this pastorate, that the liberal church in Athens was to divide the services of this clergyman. The people of Athens in this case were adherants to the faith of the Universalists. Brimblecom himself ended as a Universalist, and the Norridgewock church, under the Rev. Thomas Beede, in 1848, followed suit. Both the Rev. Dr. Packard, and the Rev. Mr. Brimblecom, took active parts in the dedication of the church in Augusta in 1825. Of more general fame, Norridgewock may rejoice as being the birthplace of the famous Unitarian clergyman, Minot Savage.

The case of Fryeburg, an Academy town, is of marked interest from the point of view of missionary effort. In the year 1824, the old Congregational Church went through the dangerous ordeal of changing its Covenant. This brought the difference of opinion into sharp relief, causing a split in the church. The liberal element for a change took itself off, holding separate services in the Academy building. They managed only occasional preaching. This state of affairs held for a period of four years, even under the strong influence of the Rev. Ralph Waldo Emerson, who travelled to this place on several missions, but the attempt was finally given up. Yet as late as the year 1834, the American Unitarian Association was paying toward the support of preaching in that town.

The church in Belgrade described as "liberal for the time" was dedicated in 1828 with such noted liberals as Brimblecom of Norridgewock; Hutchins of New Portland; and Drew of Augusta. It labored for existence under the enthusiastic ministry of the Rev. William Farmer until 1837. Here was a case, as in so many others, in which the population followed more the personality of an individual, rather than a deeply rooted Faith. The good people here remained liberal, though not Unitarian.

Castine was one of the early liberal communities in Maine; and it rejoices in the oldest church building in its section of Maine, having been erected in 1790. Like many another Unitarian Church, it had its day and passed into the limbo of

almost forgotten attempts. After 1838 regular services were suspended, though the name was kept on the Year Book until 1848, nor did it return until 1867, when it was mainly revived by the Maine State Missionary of the American Unitarian Association. During the period of suspended animation, the little society kept the property, but it was used by the Universalists.

For a time it shared with Orland, the services of Mr. W. W. Walker, a Tufts Divinity School student. In 1898 the Centennial Anniversary of the installation of the Rev. William Mason, was made a matter of brave display on the part of this ancient church. It was amply supported with the enthusiastic co-operation of the churches of our denomination in the State of Maine. Great care should be given to this church by our national organization, for here is located a Maritime Academy of excellent standing.

The Castine Church, once almost in utter ruin, was saved mainly through the heroic efforts in 1897, of a devout and invalid parishoner, whose encouragement brought about the physical resurrection of this charming as well as historic building. The old, old story of the happy issue of affairs through faith and work.

During the first fifty years of Unitarianism in the State of Maine, following the denominational formation of 1825, twelve churches were organized. They were: Augusta, Brunswick and Topsham, Calais, Houlton, The Second Society in Portland, West Thomaston, Bath, Bucksport, Perry, Waterville, Ellsworth, and Farmington. The formation of the Portland Ministry-at-Large may be mentioned here, though it was not established as a church, yet under the able leadership of the late Rev. Arthur Pettengill, the Church in Preble Chapel was formed from this nucleus in 1921. Of these churches we today have Augusta, Ellsworth and the Chapel, while the Society in Farmington, though in possession of its property, is as a church very inactive. The Calais church, organized in 1831, sold half its property in 1870 to the Universalists. In recent years it has had Unitarian preaching though its name is not listed in the Year Book.

Bath was organized in 1848, and enjoyed rather an active existence until 1863, its name having been actually dropped

from the records as late as 1866. Here the people erected a "Greek Temple." Over the affairs of the church, during two pastorates was the Rev. David N. Sheldon, a convert from the Baptist ministry, and one of the most indefatigable workers in the Unitarian ministry. Here in Bath the Third Annual Meeting of the Unitarian Association of Maine was held in 1855,—at which time a resolution offered and adopted asks "to communicate with the A. U. A., on the subject of the appointment, forthwith, of a Missionary or Colportum for our state." This idea was brought forward by the Rev. Mr. Lathrop of Calais. That the thought took root is evidenced by the fact that the Rev. Mr. Sheldon became largely engaged in the missionary field working valiantly in Waterville, on the Kennebec.

In a letter from Bath, dated Oct. 16, 1860, Mr. Sheldon reports: "I found there an earnest desire for Unitarian preaching; and a good prospect of gathering, at no distant day, a strong, self-sustaining Unitarian society. My whole audience often numbered about three hundred persons. As many as thirty heads of families can be counted up, who are anxious to see a Unitarian society organized in Waterville."

The Rev. David N. Sheldon, D.D., has been called the "father of Unitarianism in Waterville." This church became extinct in 1942 as a factor in our greater religious life. Yet in the denomination, this church had been active in our general state life, playing host on several occasions to the State Conference of Unitarian Churches. Activity of the various organizations within the church show a good record, and one of the interesting tasks undertaken was by the Auxiliary in 1891, when they raised money "to secure the printing of two Unitarian tracts in the Khasi language for the use of Mr. Kissor Singh, in Assam, India."

Today this church is closed, and its pulpit now adorns the new parish hall of the First Congregational Church in South Portland,—the ancient Second Parish in Falmouth, on Meetinghouse Hill. The tragedy of our denomination in the loss of this church is great, for Waterville is the home of Colby College, an active and alert institution, and our absence from such a scene is a monument to real failure: the shame is ours.

The Brunswick-Topsham churches marked an interesting experiment in 1830, when the Second Congregational Society, Unitarian, was formed. It never had any legal existence, nor did it rejoice in any settled ministry. In consequence, it became Universalist, five years later. The next effort was known as the "Mason Street Society," in 1850, which was under the guidance of that grand old warrior, the Rev. Amos D. Wheeler, D.D. Here for sixteen years he labored, and was followed in the field by the Rev. William French, Universalist. The end came in 1875. The Unitarian Society of Brunswick, formed in 1874, did not have regular preaching for a number of years. In 1878 our old friend Dr. Sheldon was hard at work in a missionary capacity, the fruits of which were good, for regular preaching under the Rev. Charles A. Allen, showed renewed life. He was followed by the tireless Rev. Edward C. Guild in 1894.

The Topsham church in 1836, discovered the majority of the pew-owners were Unitarian, though the society had started as Presbyterian. This church remained in Topsham until 1850, when it merged with the sister Unitarian church in Brunswick. The word "Topsham" vanishes from our list by 1855. There seems to have been an early agreement that the Universalists should remain in Brunswick, and the Unitarians stay in Topsham. For whatever reasons, it is nevertheless too apparent that the soil of Brunswick, a fine old town with a very wide-awake college was not for our cause: a matter which could be studied with care to discover the reason why Unitarianism does not thrive in academic communities in Maine.

Early churches such as existed in Perry, Bucksport, West Thomaston, seem to have been able to exist, however much they tried, only because of a personality. In each case the personality was of course the minister. In any event the real number of Unitarians in the communities mentioned were not numerically strong enough to do much about the matter. Bucksport, for example, had preaching for only three years, and was recognized as a church two years after it had in reality ceased to exist: yet, as late as 1873, it was still on the Maine Conference list, and sent one delegate that year to the



conference in Ellsworth. Similar examples are met in the State: in point of fact, one delegate from Freeport attended the meeting in Farmington in 1871. Now Freeport never had a Unitarian Church. At the Bangor Conference in 1867, the Rev. W. E. Copeland spoke at length regarding his missionary efforts in Freeport, stating that he believed "that a society would be organized there before another year was passed." The year passed, and the formal society was non-existent. In more recent years, the Rev. Walter S. Swisher, D.D., served the Congregational Church for a matter of six years, with Unitarian Christian preaching.

North New Portland had for years, as had Naples, a Union Church. Our missionary in 1881, wrote that he was never more heartily welcomed there than at his last visit. There were few avowed Unitarians in the place. Our missionary was active there as early as 1870, and at the Maine Conference the following year this little community sent five delegates, and so for two years more. This community was by old tradition a Freewill Baptist stronghold.

In Maine, experimentation in the missionary field was a picture of bravery little short of heroic. Our churchmen were eternally slaving in any field that showed the least tendency toward a real or imagined liberalism. They left no stone unturned; and it does seem that in Maine, certainly, it is the veriest nonsense to say "You may be a Unitarian without knowing it." Down East we know!

In the year 1881, the Rev. Dr. Sheldon reported: "So far as I could judge, Deer Isle promises to be an inviting place for Unitarian preaching in the near future. Prejudices are likely to be met; but our cause has warm friends among the people." Here the only trouble seems to have been that the Baptists and the Methodists had warmer and more numerous friends.

Winthrop received the attentions, solicited by the inhabitants, from the Rev. P. S. Thatcher of Augusta. He held services here every Sunday afternoon for a year and a half, to a congregation that numbered over a hundred. Our ancient magazine *The Unitarian*, for March 1887, states that these people are "about to organize;" and from the same source it



is reported in January of the following year that the "Unitarian Society organized here." This group became non-existent in 1894, presumably becoming Universalist.

Parallel with the experiment in Winthrop, and almost date for date, we find a church being established in Dixfield. Here an old unused church fell into the hands of the Universalists, under whom it became unused. The Rev. S. C. Beane went there, talked to the people, and forthwith organized a Unitarian society, which "virtually embraces nearly the whole town, and is today the only religious institution in the town." The following year we discover no settled minister, and when one finally did arrive, it was too late, the enthusiasm had died out, and in 1893 the members of this church united with the Universalists in Rumford.

Presque Isle and Yarmouth established their churches in 1886. In the case of the former, they had difficulty at first, for their existence had actually begun in 1875. From the little church, however, was launched one of the most heroic missionary movements yet experienced in Maine. In April, 1892, the Rev. Messrs. Seward, Marsh, Crosby, and Porter, all ministers of Maine churches, with the able assistance of Dr. Moors, A. U. A. Superintendent of Missionary Work for New England, started out on a preaching tour. Missions were held in Caribou, Fort Fairfield, Blaine, Presque Isle, and Houlton. These meetings were made possible by the vote of the Maine Conference, of \$150.00, and by the vote of the various parishes to excuse their ministers for two Sundays. In some cases the visiting clergymen travelled from eight hundred to a thousand miles going and returning. Through the generosity of the railroads and the contributions received, it was unnecessary to use the funds allotted by the Conference. This work gave Presque Isle great encouragement; it inspired Fort Fairfield, and we nearly won the town of Caribou.

Presque Isle always brings forth the thought of Fort Fairfield. A letter from the former parish on Oct. 18, 1905, written by the Rev. Thomas E. Chappell, says: "The new church at Fort Fairfield has been ready for some time for dedication, but we have decided that we will not dedicate it until a new minister is called, when we can have the installation services

and the dedication services at the same time, and make a more pleasant and profitable occasion of it." Well, the last valiant attempt at these twin parishes was during the years 1929 and 1930, when the good Rev. George MacKay, now of Eastport, took missionary charge over them while he was minister in Houlton. Presque Isle, along with Calais, Farmington, Fort Fairfield, and Waterville, keep the Unitarian "watch and ward," of our faith through the agencies of active Alliances.

One might search in vain for any reference to Maine in Unitarian reports and not find the statement that it was a field for missionary work. As early as 1831 we discover the Rev. Edward Edes doing work in Farmington, where a society was formed, which continued until a reorganization in 1872 with the Universalists. Probably the most outstanding attempt of this parish was under the energetic Rev. William H. Ramsay. During the early months of 1896, this minister was invited to preach in Temple bi-weekly, for a period of six months. By the middle of the year, it was duly reported that "Services continue to draw large congregations and a church organization is in the process of formation." To this added task, the Rev. Mr. Ramsay undertook to preach in Fairbanks Mills, and at New Sharon. It was reported in November 1896: "actually at Fairbanks Mills, it is a Union Church, and though an attempt has been made to exclude the Unitarians, they finally permitted them one Sunday a month." Of greatest importance in this locale is the Normal School, now called The Teachers' College, one good reason why Unitarianism should be supported there.

During the next decade, we find missionaries wrestling with the problem, at ridiculously low fees. Such men as the Rev. Messrs. Seth E. Winslow, William L. Stearns, Luther Willson, George A. Williams, Edward Stone, Richard Pike, John T. G. Nichols, and Matthew Harding, were roaming the length and breadth of the state. Places visited on many occasions, because interest had been shown, were Bath, Bethel, Belgrade, Athens, Unity, Skowhegan, North Anson, and Norridgewock. Of these Athens and Bethel wanted missionary work. Unity decided against us. Dixmont gave a definite call; while Skowhegan, North Anson, and Athens gave every prospect of success.

In all probability the greatest of the missionaries were the Rev. Amos D. Wheeler, D.D. and David N. Sheldon, D.D. Of Dr. Wheeler it has been said: "his services as missionary have been attended with great success. They have been very arduous, because the territory is great; and he has been compelled to travel great distances almost every week and often in very inclement weather and away from railroad communications. The cause and this Association are largely indebted to him, not only for his efficient and active service in these ways, but also for his good judgement with which he has acted and helped us to act in all cases of difficulty which have arisen in connection with the various interests of our denomination in that section." (May 24, 1870, Charles Lowe, Sec'y for the Executive Committee, A. U. A.).

Dr. Sheldon followed as State Missionary, and he found as late as 1884, that not only in Maine, but throughout New England as well, "our chief work in the future will not be merely to support churches in declining villages." Yet despite this warning, the era of daring enthusiasm burned with a clarity, little short of wonderful to behold.

Examples of this ardent spirit are discernable throughout the annals of our church in the State of Maine. An example being that of the Rev. James T. Hewes of the Second Unitarian Society in Portland. He was installed in that church in the year 1864, and but four years later felt compelled to leave his post for the struggling little congregation in Sacarapa, where he had for considerable time been taking active interest. Here, despite "an increasing attendance," the church vanished into thin air. It is reported that its failure was due to the fact they had no sanctuary of their own. Just prior to this time, the Rev. Dr. Wheeler (1866) divided the time needed for services with the Methodist Society.

As early as 1892, the Rev. D. M. Wilson, then American Unitarian Association Superintendent for New England, wrote to the Sec'y of the Maine Conference: "They" (the Cochranes, both husband and wife were Unitarian ministers) "can take care of Ellsworth, Lamoine, Sullivan, and West Gouldsboro." And apparently the worthy superintendent was correct, nor were the Cochranes dismayed that the fee was only \$1500.

The Rev. John Carroll Perkins, Sec'y of the Maine Conference, (designated by the Rev. E. E. Newbert of Augusta as "the good bishop") received a letter in 1899 from the Rev. J. F. Porter: "I am going by boat tomorrow to Winter Harbor expecting to canvass the matter of a permanent settlement over a circuit of four societies in Hancock County:—Sullivan Harbor, West Gouldsboro, Winter Harbor, and Prospect Harbor. I have the refusal of a farm — on very favorable terms." From these four societies there was a promise of \$400, and an added boost from the A. U. A. of a further \$200. In the light of that reward, one must inevitably believe in "Visible Saints," nor be unwilling to agree that the Rev. Mr. Porter was "not grasping in my expectations as to salary."

The mention of these communities causes us to turn naturally to the subject of the Hancock Conference, which was established in 1888, mainly through the efforts of the Rev. Dr. Samuel A. Eliot, our energetic and true churchman. He had assembled this conference from the various points of contact made over a period of years by our interested clergymen, while summering in this region. The first conference was held at Bar Harbor on Thursday, August 8th, and was attended by representatives of the Bangor and Ellsworth churches, and the Unitarian and liberal communities of Bar Harbor, Northeast Harbor, Sullivan, East Sullivan, Gouldsboro, West Gouldsboro, Lamoine, Prospect Harbor, North Lamoine, Somerville, Steuben, and Salisbury Cove. This gathering was what was called a "basket" conference. In all it was reported that 180 people assembled. Of this, probably the oldest in Unitarian effort was the little group from Lamoine, it having been assembled as early as 1872, by the Rev. Mr. Wilson. The Hancock Conference may have been of slow growth, yet its value is real, for today it still continues even though many of the original members have ceased to be.

Many of these churches put up a brave fight for existence, by holding what is commonly called "Summer Preaching." Moreover, in many cases, they held bi-weekly winter services with clergymen from the larger communities, and in some instances, with their own Lay-readers. During the height of

this experiment these churches had the best student ministers available, as well as the attention of such men of eminence as: the Rev. Messrs. Charles F. Dole, Samuel M. Crothers, Francis G. Peabody, G. A. Gordon, P. S. Moxon, Thomas Van Ness, Charles C. Everett, Brooke Herford, Seth C. Beach, F. E. Healey, Grindall Reynolds, Edward Everett Hale, and many others. If this enterprise is not listed as successful, it was not due to Unitarian neglect, nor for want of vigour on the part of our clergy.

Preaching stations have from time to time sprung up throughout the length and breadth of the state, as necessity or expedience at the moment seemed to require; nor should we attribute their present non-existence as a matter of failure. We might mention such places as Addison, Lincoln, York Harbor (this was a dismal failure with just ourselves to blame), Lebanon, Frankfort, and Rockland. The fine endeavor in 1899 of the Rev. Arthur Pettengill to establish sound groundwork at Camden, should not be misjudged. The Rev. Mr. Emery at the same period attempted to establish the Liberal Church at Boothbay Harbor; but his progress at Ocean Point was very successful, for a letter from 25 Beacon Street, in September 1899 states of this particular place, "we shall soon have a chapel there."

One of the gems along the Maine coast is the little Memorial Chapel at Ocean Point, erected to the blessed memory of Janet M. Wilson. This lovely place was dedicated on Sunday, August 5, 1917; its character is undenominational. We Unitarians may feel a just pride in the work done here. An amusing incident occurring in that place last year was the surprise of a Baptist clergyman who had preached there with marked success, and upon learning that it was listed as a Unitarian preaching station, asked his friends not to say anything about the matter lest his parishioners hear of it. Here at Fisherman's Island, the pleasant retreat for Unitarian ministers, under the able leadership of the Rev. John Henry Wilson, devotes itself to prayer, and the warmth of friendly and free discourse.

There were a few examples of preaching stations where the real attempt was to establish regular churches. At Bar



Mills in 1857, by the Rev. John T. G. Nichols of Saco; West Buxton in 1897, under the zealous leadership of Mr. C. E. Ordway, student at Meadville; and lastly of the very recent attempt at Wells, under the leadership of the Rev. Arthur Schoenfeldt, at that time our minister in Kennebunk.

Bar Mills, West Buxton, Yarmouth and Standish seem lost to the cause. It seems short-sighted, for our modern ways of living, and improved transportation, are making these communities but suburbs of our larger cities. The attempt at Gorham bid fair to succeed, until the people were told to merge with the church in Standish, some eight miles away. Communities want and need their own churches. The York Harbor preaching from 1890 to 1903 seemed to be successful, and therefore desirable. Clergymen such as the Rev. Messrs. Andrew P. Peabody, Charles F. Dole, James DeNormandie, Samuel Longfellow, Robert Collyer and the like, laid and maintained an excellent groundwork, where upholding the same standard, the Union Church should have prospered. Its death was due to old age — the young people found little encouragement there.

The summer station at Swanville, organized in 1942, seems to fill a much needed want. It is a Community Church, and seems to have been the last example in the state wherein the Unitarians and the Universalists apparently discovered a lack of understanding. Such situations have, naturally enough, cropped up during the years. We have already noted a certain rivalry, and in 1899 some sorrow rose between the two, when the Unitarian Church was accused of "unprincipled action of Unitarian mission work in Maine." This had specific reference to an attempt at Caribou. An exchange of letters between two Unitarian clergymen is interesting, in particular, a comment regarding this sorry issue: "A doubling with Caribou seems to me to be the only salvation for Presque Isle. If in the mind of the Universalist agent we are already considered unprincipled we have no reputation to lose. It might be retorted that the Universalists had stolen our church in Winthrop."

As most of the clergymen in the Province of Maine were men who had been educated in Boston, it would be obvious



that any thought which might be current there would be reflected in the north, as it was. Early outcroppings of liberalism were more or less easily suppressed, but by the time of the visit of the Rev. George Whitefield in 1745, it was a matter of concern, as it was discovered that many of the prominent laymen were "in violent opposition to him."

To be sure in Maine we seem to have offered nothing but enthusiasm for the Unitarian faith. We are proud of the efforts put into it; and our minds turn with pleasure to the bit of folklore if we may so call it, in the story of the founding of our youngest church in Sanford. So runs the story: The Rev. Mr. Prescott began his preaching there in a park and upon a box. If so, we should have more parks and more boxes, for the church in Sanford is vigorous, as well as beautiful, and a force for good within our Conference and in its community.

As in other places, Maine as early as 1840, held with the so-called "New Hampshire Covenant." It was almost the accepted formula of faith in our churches for a good many years. Its language today may seem strange to our ears, if not mildly shocking; yet we may rest assured that the doctrine held by some Unitarians today would stagger our good brethren of a century ago.

Maine has had some of the outstanding Unitarian Christian clergymen since the movement started here: Ichabod Nichols, Cazneau Palfrey, Andrew Bigelow, Joshua A. Swan, Horatio Stebbins, Frederick Hedge of "Hedge Club" fame, and translator of "A Mighty Fortress"; the intellectual Sylvester Judd, and his son-in-law, the hymnologist Seth C. Beach, Charles C. Everett, the world renowned astronomer Joel H. Metcalf, and the very remarkable educator Thomas Hill, to mention but a few. While on the other side of the scale, we have sent such sons forth into the ministry as John Q. Day, Cyrus A. Bartol, George M. Bartol, Samuel Longfellow, Nicholas E. Boyd, Roderick Stebbins, Charles Elder, John Carroll Perkins, John T. G. Nichols, Walter R. Hunt, Frank Gilmore, Elbridge F. Stoneham, and H. B. Whitney.

Today we have twelve active churches and three such preaching stations for summer work; more of our churches

could be available, for active alliances remaining in towns and cities wherein our churches are closed, disposes one to the belief that Unitarianism is not a dead issue in Maine. Liberalism has been kept alive through the quiet but determined principles of Unitarianism. Our Conference grew from a little gathering of our ministers in western Maine. Our one church paper originating in Portland in 1893, as the "Church Exchange," became in 1946 the "Maine Unitarian," and as of this year branched forth to incorporate the ideals of its origin as well. Our churches, however isolated, are alive. Our hopes are very high, our courage as great as it ever was. It may be truly said that the American Unitarian Association has had great possibilities in Maine in the past,—and they always will have, those same possibilities.

# *The Historical Background of the Present King's Chapel*

By HENRY WILDER FOOTE, D.D.\*

We do well to commemorate the laying of the cornerstone of this historic building two centuries ago but we shall better understand the significance of the occasion if we briefly summarize the course of events which led to that action.

As early as 1679 a number of persons in Boston petitioned the king to erect a church "for the exercise of religion according to the Church of England," but it was not until May 15, 1686, that Rev. Robert Ratcliffe landed here, the first Anglican clergyman formally commissioned to conduct worship on New England soil according to the usage of the Book of Common Prayer. Mr. Ratcliffe at once began to hold services in the Town House and, a month after his arrival, a church was organized on June 15, 1686. There was strong local opposition to the new enterprise, as much on political as on theological grounds. The Puritans of Massachusetts Bay had not forgotten the part played by Archbishop Laud in the tyranny of Charles I, for they were the sons or grandsons of men whom that tyranny had driven from their homes in England. It was quite natural that they should fear that an organization officially representing the established Church of England might in Boston become a repressive instrument in the hands of the royal governor, then the hated and despotic Sir Edmund Andros. As a result no landowner would sell a site for the proposed building, and in 1688 Andros and the Council solved the problem by appropriating a corner of the oldest burying ground in the town, on what was then its extreme southwestern edge, where were laid the foundations of a building in which the first service was held on June 30, 1689.

This first church building must have been a very small structure for it cost only £284.16.0, to which there were 96 subscribers, the balance needed being made up by Governor Andros and a number of British army officers, though Andros

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\*This article combines the substance of two addresses by Dr. Foote: the first delivered at the meeting of the Unitarian Historical Society held in King's Chapel on May 24; the second delivered on November 14, 1949, as part of the exercises commemorating the bicentenary of the laying of the cornerstone of the existing church. *The Annals of King's Chapel*, by Dr. Foote's father, was the chief source for the information here presented.

was deposed before the building was completed. Only a few years later it was reported that "our church here is very neat and convenient, but 'tis too small," and in 1710 it was enlarged to twice its original size. Daniel Neal, the historian of English Puritanism, in his *History of New England*, published in 1720, in his account of Boston says that "the Episcopal Church . . . may consist of about a Thousand Hearers," but he certainly did not mean that it could seat that number. The figure is presumably a rough estimate of the number of Episcopalians living near enough to reach the church occasionally. In any case the number was sufficient by 1724 to warrant the erection of Christ Church, the Chapel's elder daughter, to accommodate parishioners living in the North End.

The only known picture of this first King's Chapel is the very minute one included in Price's rare panorama of Boston engraved soon after 1720, though the earliest extant print is one of the issue of 1743. In this print the upper part and roof of the wooden building, and the tower, are seen against the background of Beacon Hill rising high above it and crowned with the beacon. A vignette, redrawn from this part of Price's engraving, is in the *Annals of King's Chapel* and in *The Memorial History of Boston*. It shows a building with three arched windows on the side and three at the east end, and a small square tower surmounted by a tall spindle with a crown halfway up and a large weather-cock on top. The device now employed by the Beacon Press is a conventionalized adaptation of this vignette, chosen, however, because it shows the beacon rather than the church.

Rev. Robert Ratcliffe resigned in 1689 and was followed by Rev. Samuel Myles, who served the church well for nearly 39 years. In 1692 Myles went to England, and stayed there for four years, presumably to gain support for his weak and hard-pressed colonial parish. His success is indicated by the royal gifts which he brought with him on his return in 1696, and which followed in the course of the next two years. He "brought with him part of the gift of Quene Mary, performed By King William After her Decease, viz: the Church Furniture, which were A Cushion and Cloth for the Pulpit, two

Cushions for the Reading Deske, a Carpet for the Allter, All of Crimson Damask with Silke Fringe, one Large Bible, two large Common-prayer Books, Twelve Lesser Common-prayer Bookes, Linen for the Allter; Also two Surplises, Alter tabell, 20 ydes fine damask"; also "The Decalouge, viz: thee tenn Commandments, the Lord's Prayer and the Creed were drawne in England and Brought over By Mr Samuells Myles." These last were the four tablets still to be seen in the chancel. The communion table, still in use, was certainly made before 1700, but the exact date and place of origin are uncertain. A drawing of it in The Annals of King's Chapel gives the date as 1686, which suggests that it was constructed here for use at the earliest services in the Town House. This is improbable, and there is no documentary evidence to support it. It would seem more likely that it is the "Alter Tabell" brought over from England by Myles in 1696 as part of the church furniture.

In 1698 came the set of communion silver given by William and Mary, and used in the church for 70 years, when Governor Bernard brought another set as the gift of King George III, and the earlier set was divided between Christ Church, Cambridge and St. Paul's, Newburyport. Christ Church still has the flagon, chalice and paten which it received, inscribed, "The gift of K. William and Q. Mary to ye Reved Samell Myles for ye use of their Maj'ties Chappell in N. England: 1694." This date is no doubt that on which the gift was promised, although it was not received until four years later. Dr. John Carroll Perkins was told many years ago by a rector of St. Paul's in Newburyport that the other half of the William and Mary silver which went to that church had been stolen from the minister's house in 1867.

King William's gift of a library was also received in 1698. It consisted of 92 folio, 18 quarto and 90 smaller volumes, forming a first-rate theological library for the use of the minister, bound in leather and stamped as the gift of William III to "the library of Boston." It was the only collection of books in New England which was not in private hands, except the library of Harvard College. The larger part of this library is preserved at the Boston Athenaeum, The oldest book is a

copy of Cassianus, de Institututis Coenobriorun, printed at Basel in 1485. When it reached Boston 213 years after it was printed it was probably the first example of 15th century incunabula to arrive in the North American Colonies.

In addition to the furnishings given by William and Mary we have other items of information about the interior of the first building. The church was decorated with an escutcheon bearing the royal arms, and with other escutcheons showing the arms of the royal governors, and occasionally of other persons of distinction, hung on the pillars. In 1712 it was "agreed that the pulpit be removed to the next pillar at the East, being near the center of the church," and also "that the pews be built in one form without banisters." Up to that time the seats were probably benches without backs, for square box pews were just coming into vogue in England. Daniel Neal, already quoted, also records that "the Governor's Pew is built in a magnificent Manner at the Charge of the Congregation."

In 1711 Thomas Brattle of Boston had imported for his private use what was called a "Pair of Organs." Dying in 1713 he bequeathed his organ to the Brattle Square Church, of which he had been a founder, or to King's Chapel should the Brattle Square Church refuse it, which he rightly surmised would be the case. The organ, therefore, came to the Chapel, where it was set up in 1714, the first organ to be installed in any church in the British American Colonies. There being no one in Boston who could fulfil Brattle's requirement that the church which accepted his bequest should "procure a Sober person that can play skilfully thereon with a loud noise," the Chapel brought over from England its first organist, Edward Enstone.

The Brattle organ was transferred to the present building, but in 1756 a new and much larger one was installed, costing £500 in London and £637 on its delivery here in 44 cases and barrels. The Boston Gazette reported that the new organ was "esteemed by the most eminent masters in England to be equal, if not superior, to any of the same size in Europe." Inasmuch as Handel was still alive in London this reference to "the most eminent masters" has given rise to



the legend that Handel selected the instrument,—which may possibly have been the case although decisive evidence is lacking. Brattle's organ was sold to St. Paul's Church, Newburyport, and again, in 1836, to St. John's, Portsmouth, where it still exists in playable condition though long since disused. The second organ in King's Chapel served for about 150 years, with various overhauls, until the installation of the present instrument, in the casing of which a small piece of carving from the casing of the Brattle organ has been enclosed. From the middle of the 18th century King's Chapel was an important musical center. William Selby, who was organist from 1771-1798, was the best musician in town, and was himself a composer. He organized concerts in the church at which music by Bach and Handel was rendered. On December 25, 1815, the first oratorio performed by the Handel and Haydn Society was given here, as were six later concerts by that Society, the latest being that of March 17, 1817.

In December, 1717, it was voted "that there be a New Pulpit forthwith Built, and that it stand against the Pillar in the Officers Pew." It was finished the next year, and cost £36.13.0. It was transferred to the present building when that was completed and stands not many feet from its original location, probably one of the oldest unaltered pulpits in the country. While still in the original church it was occupied by two visiting ministers whose fame survives today. The first was George Berkeley, then Dean of Derry, later Bishop of Cloyne, who had come to America to establish in Bermuda a Missionary College for the conversion of "the American savages." He was already distinguished for his varied accomplishments. He landed at Newport in January, 1729, stayed there two and a half years, and returned to England when his romantic enterprise failed through lack of support. He sailed from Boston in September, 1731, at which time he spent ten days here, and Benjamin Walker recorded in his diary, Sept. 12, 1731, "in ye morn Dean George Berkeley preacht in ye King's Chapel from ye 1st Epistle to Timothy ye 3rd Chap. verse 16, and a fine sermon. According to my opinion I never heard such a one. A very great auditory." The text cited reads "And without controversy

very great in the mystery of godliness," and a summary of the sermon is included in Fraser's *Life and Letters of George Berkeley* as the fourth of twelve sermons preached by him while in America.

The second of these visitors was the then almost unknown Charles Wesley, who spent twelve days in Boston, September 24 to October 5, 1736, when the unseaworthy ship on which he had embarked at Charleston, South Carolina, for his voyage back to England from his youthful missionary enterprise in Georgia, was obliged to put into this port for repairs. In his journal he recorded that while here he preached "in two or three churches," but he did not name them. By the time of his visit feeble Episcopal churches had been organized in Braintree, Marblehead, Salem and Newbury, but Wesley was in such poor physical condition as to call for the services of a physician and to render it highly improbable that he would have gone to even the nearest of those towns. Furthermore he records the names of several persons with whom he became acquainted, and at least three of them were associated with King's Chapel. One was "Mr. Chickeley," who must have been the high church controversialist John Checkley; another was "Dr. Gardener," who attended him professionally and cannot have been other than Dr. Sylvester Gardiner, in later years a Senior Warden of the Chapel; and the third was "Mr. Price," who drove him to the wharf when he sailed, and who obviously was Rev. Roger Price, then rector of the Chapel. We could hardly have more conclusive circumstantial evidence that Wesley occupied the pulpit of King's Chapel on at least one occasion while he was here, and that Christ Church, in the North End, was the second church in which he preached.

In the records of the church it is noted that "being found in the year 1741 in a State of considerable decay, it was proposed to rebuild it with Stone." A subscription was started, headed by William Shirley, presently to be appointed governor, with Peter Faneuil as treasurer. Faneuil, however, died in 1742, and the project languished until, in 1747, Rev. Henry Caner came to King's Chapel as rector, from the Episcopal Church in Fairfield, Conn., which he had served for

many years. Following the medieval custom he was escorted to the church door by the Wardens and Vestry and members of the parish, entered alone, locked the door behind him, tolled the bell, unlocked the door and welcomed the Wardens and Vestry, who entered and wished him joy on his having possession of the church.

Caner at once set energetically to work to secure the erection of the proposed new building. The first step was to acquire more land, since the east end of the original church abutted against the South Latin School building on School Street. Fortunately that building also needed replacement, and after prolonged negotiations its site was sold to King's Chapel and a new schoolhouse was erected on the other side of School Street. The church had to pay £2400, old tenor — that is in depreciated provincial paper money — but it acquired the needed land and the town got a new school.

There followed a campaign to raise money for the building. Governor William Shirley gave £200 sterling, Charles Apthorp gave £1000 old tenor, and others lesser sums. On April 5, 1749, Mr. Caner wrote a letter to Peter Harrison of Newport, asking him to oblige the building committee "with a Draught of a handsome Church," continuing, "The Gentlemen of the Committee are encouraged to make this Application to you whom they have often heard mentioned with Advantage for a particular Judgment and Taste in Things of this Kind . . . The Building is to be of rough stone, and since the Charge will greatly increase by carrying the Walls very high, if it does not interfere with your Judgment, we should perhaps be pleased with one Tier of Windows only."

Peter Harrison, to whom this request was addressed, came of a Quaker family in England, but he had emigrated with his brother to Newport, where he prospered as a merchant, joined the Church of England, and eloped with the heiress Elizabeth Pelham, whose family objected to their marriage. A biography of him, by Mr. Carl Bridenbaugh has just been published\* and gives a most interesting account of an able and enterprising man. He crossed the Atlantic several times

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\*Peter Harrison; The First American Architect. North Carolina University Press. 1949.

and accumulated a large library, including all the most recent books on architecture, which was not at the time the work of professionals but an avocation for gentlemen with a taste for design. He had already designed the Redwood Library in Newport, where he also planned the Touro Synagogue and other buildings, and Mr. Bridenbaugh gives good grounds for believing that he designed St. Michael's Church in Charleston, S. C., a building which shares with King's Chapel the reputation of being one of the two most beautiful church edifices in the British American Colonies.

While waiting for Harrison's plans the committee went ahead to lay foundations, and the cornerstone was ceremoniously placed by Governor Shirley on August 11, 1749, with a Latin inscription no longer to be seen because under ground. On September 15 Harrison sent the plans "by Post Rider" with apologies for delay, and, indeed, he was a very busy man. He wrote, "The Body of the Building (he meant the exterior) is as plain as the Order of it will possibly admit of, but the Steeple is fully decorated, and I believe it will have a beautiful Effect." The Committee were "well pleased with Mr. Harrison's Plan and desired Mr. Caner to write him a Letter of Thanks to acquaint him therewith, and that they had determined to follow it as nearly as possibly they could; and withal to acquaint him that when it should be in their Power they should make a further Acknowledgment of his Favour."

That appears to be the only thanks which Harrison ever received, and of course there was no fee, which was not expected and, in his case, was quite unnecessary, since he was then a man of wealth. Although Harrison and his bride had presumably passed through Boston in 1746, on their way to and from New Hampshire, whither they went on their elopement to be married because he knew the governor of that province, there is no evidence that Harrison came to Boston while King's Chapel was being built, or that he saw the church until just before the Revolution, when he was here for three weeks and may be supposed to have looked at the building he had designed 25 years earlier.

The most conspicuous novelty in the construction of the church was the use of granite blocks from Quincy for its ex-

terior walls, all the earlier colonial church buildings having been structures of wood or brick. This led Rev. Mather Byles, notorious punster, to remark, as he saw the sombre, fortress-like exterior going up, that he had often heard of the canons of the church but had never seen the portholes before. The new walls were erected around the smaller wooden building which continued in use until May, 1753, when its removal began, to make possible work on the interior.

Two items in Harrison's plan call for further explanation. First, the committee's suggestion that there be only one tier of windows did not recommend itself to Harrison's judgment, since the need for galleries rendered it impracticable. In the second place, Harrison had intended to relieve the severity of the exterior by adding a tall and elaborately designed spire. His drawings for the spire have disappeared, but the specifications survive and are printed in Mr. Bridenbaugh's book. The cost was too great at the time, and the disturbances leading to the Revolution prevented its erection later. That is to be regretted, for Harrison was a fine architect, and his spire would have rivalled any in London for beauty.\* But we should be grateful for the unrivalled perfection of what we have, a very precious example of the best church architecture of the period.

The new church was opened for worship on August 21, 1754, though still unfinished. It must have looked much as it does today, save that there were no stained-glass windows in the chancel and no monuments on the walls. The records show that the pillars cost 40 shillings each, and that William Burbeck, a talented Boston craftsman (1715-1785), carved the Corinthian capitals at £30 each, old tenor.

Since it was the chapel of his Britanic Majesty, the titular head of the Church of England, it was appropriate that there should be a state pew for the Royal Governor as his representative, as there had been in the earlier building, with a canopy over it to give distinction, but, since the canopy would interfere with a view of the chancel if placed on the main aisle, the governor's pew was located on the south aisle next the

\*At the meeting on November 14 Mr. Bridenbaugh displayed a recent drawing of the spire based on the specifications.



wall. The original canopy was removed after the Revolution, but enough fragments of it were preserved to make it possible to restore it in the present century.

In this pew sat all the royal governors of the Province down to the Revolution, as well as visiting dignitaries. Col. George Washington occupied it in February, 1756, when he came to Boston after Braddock's defeat, in which one of Gov. Shirley's sons had been killed, and twice thereafter as President of the United States. The most recent personage of rank to occupy the pew was the Crown Princess, now Queen Juliana of the Netherlands, who sat in it when she attended service here in June 1941.

We still possess other relics of the 18th century symbolizing loyalties of the past. On top of the organ in the center is a gilded crown, flanked on either side, at a slightly lower level, by gilded mitres, the latter as symbols of the Bishop of London, under whose general oversight but never legally defined jurisdiction were placed all the Episcopal churches in the British Colonies, and who was represented by commissaries in various localities. These ornaments were removed during the Revolution as no longer appropriate, but were replaced in the last century when interest developed in the historic past of the church. It is probable that they were in the original building. At least, George Berkeley sent similar ornaments to Trinity Church, Newport, as a gift after his return to England. Similarly the Apostles' Creed on the right-hand tablet of the four in the chancel remains as a record of the historic past rather than as an expression of the beliefs of the present-day congregation.

Three of the oldest monuments call for mention, all of them erected within a few years of the completion of the church. The earliest is that to the memory of Frances, wife of Governor Shirley, a devoted adherent of the church who died shortly before the present building was erected. Oliver Wendell Holmes, the elder, in the beautiful poem which he read at the Bicentenary Celebration in 1886, calls her "the fair Francisca of the southern wall." You may read the long Latin inscription if you will — and can — but I call attention to the monument as one of the finest examples of 18th cen-



ture monumental sculpture in America. You will find the name of the sculptor, Peter Scheemakers, on the lower right-hand corner. He was a Fleming who was for many years one of the foremost sculptors in London. The Shirley tomb is in the crypt directly below the monument.

The second monument is that to Charles Apthorp on the northern wall. Apthorp was a man of large wealth, for many years active in community and church, who gave £1000 for this building. He and his wife had eighteen children and the family occupied a double pew, Nos. 5 and 22, from aisle to aisle. He died in 1758 and his monument with the weeping cherub is by another famous London sculptor, Henry Cheere. The Apthorp tomb is also in the crypt, directly below the monument. A number of years ago, when Mr. Arundel Esdaile, then secretary of the British Museum, visited Boston, I was asked to show him the Chapel. When he saw these two monuments he was much interested. "My wife," he said, "is now writing a history of 18th century sculptors in England. She knows Scheemakers and Cheere very well, but she has no idea that any of their work is to be found in America. I must send her photographs of these monuments." I doubt if there are in this country any other examples of the work of either sculptor.

The third monument, on the wall to the north of the front door, is the work of a less known English sculptor, William Tyler, and was erected in 1760, to commemorate Samuel Vassall who had died in 1737. His family was long associated with the church.

The Revolution brought great distress to the congregation of the Chapel. Dr. Caner was, of course, a loyalist who left with General Gage, taking the church records and silver to save them from the mob which he, no doubt, expected would loot the town. He went to Halifax and then to England, where he was pensioned until his death in 1792, in his 93d year. The records were recovered in 1805, but the silver was distributed to churches in "his Majesty's remaining provinces." Some of it is believed to be in New Brunswick. Of the 73 pew-holders 30 were loyalists who left; 43 were of the

patriot party who remained. No services were held until 1781 when they were resumed with "readers," in the absence of any available clergyman.

In 1782 Mr. James Freeman became the reader. He had been interested in the type of Unitarian thinking then developing both in England and in Massachusetts, and his request for a revision of the prayer-book was approved by the congregation. All the Episcopal churches in the Colonies were then in an anomalous position. They were no longer under the Bishop of London; they had no bishop of their own; and they had to alter their service at least to the extent of eliminating prayers for the royal family. Freeman was largely influenced by the reformed liturgy already brought out by Dr. Samuel Clarke in London. The first edition of the King's Chapel Liturgy came out in 1785, with all references to the Trinity omitted. There was at the time no intention of seceding from the Episcopal Church, but when Freeman applied for ordination to Bishop Seabury and then to Bishop Provoost, after their arrival in America, he was refused unless he would recant his errors and abandon use of the revised liturgy. He declined to do so, and his congregation upheld him. They proceeded, instead, to ordain him themselves, November 18, 1787, on the principle laid down in The Cambridge Platform of 1648, that the right of ordination resides in the congregation itself. And thus King's Chapel, the oldest Episcopal church in New England became the first avowedly Unitarian church in the United States.

Neither this building nor its wooden predecessor was ever formally consecrated according to the Anglican ritual, because that rite must be performed by a bishop, and no bishop of the Church of England visited these shores in the colonial period. But none of us who love this noble building and its historic past doubt that its consecration has come from a higher and more authentic source,—the devoted lives of successive generations of the wise and good, whether persons distinguished in their day or the unremembered holy and humble men of heart, who have here uplifted their hearts and minds in worship and thanksgiving.

And, curiously enough, neither the present building nor its predecessor appears ever to have been known by the name of a saint or of some aspect of the Divine Being, as was universally the case in England, and as the Chapel's two pre-Revolutionary daughter-churches in Boston were called Christ Church and Trinity Church. This church, and the earlier building, were always called "The King's Chapel," when a king was on the English throne, or "The Queen's Chapel" during the reign of Queen Anne, or "The Stone Chapel" for a time after the Revolution. I have no explanation of this fact which has puzzled me, but we accept the traditional name not only because of its historic significance but because for us, as for Mrs. Dorr in the sonnet about the Chapel which she wrote more than 75 years ago, "In the King's Chapel reigns the King of Kings."

## *Annual Meeting, 1949*

The Forty-ninth Annual Meeting of the Unitarian Historical Society took place on Tuesday, May 24, 1949, at King's Chapel, with President Frederick Lewis Weis presiding. The Secretary presented the minutes of the last meeting, and a gratifying list of new members was reported.

The Treasurer, Mr. Dudley H. Dorr, read his report which was accepted and placed on file.

The Nominating Committee submitted the following names of persons, who were duly elected to their respective offices:

Rev. Frederick L. Weis, Th.D., President  
Rev. Charles E. Park, D.D., Vice-President  
Rev. Earl M. Wilbur, D.D., Hon. Vice-President  
Rev. Henry W. Foote, D.D., Hon. Vice-President  
Rev. John Henry Wilson, Secretary  
Dudley Huntington Dorr, Esq., Treasurer  
Mrs. Martha Denham Watts, Librarian  
Gorham Dana, Esq., Auditor

and the following Directors for Three Years:

Prof. Charles H. Lyttle, Th.D., 1949-1952

Mr. Carleton Potter Small, 1949-1952

The speakers were Dr. Clifford K. Shipton of Harvard University who gave an excellent history of the lives and characters of Increase and Cotton Mather of the Second Church in Boston now celebrating the 300th anniversary of its founding, and Dr. Henry Wilder Foote, D.D., who gave an equally interesting account of the building of the present King's Chapel edifice two hundred years ago this year, and of its predecessors.

The meeting adjourned at noon.

Respectfully submitted,  
JOHN HENRY WILSON,  
Secretary

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Committees reappointed:

Publication Committee: Frederick L. Weis, John H. Wilson,  
Dudley H. Dorr.

Library Committee: Henry W. Foote, Robert D. Richardson,  
Samuel A. Eliot and the President, Secretary and Librarian ex-officio.

# *The Unitarian Historical Society*

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1917-1919 Rev. Henry Wilder Foote, D.D.  
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1939-1941 Miss Edith F. Gardner  
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1941-1944 John Gardner Greene  
1944- Rev. Dana McLean Greeley  
1948- Carleton P. Small

#### HONORARY MEMBER

- 1945- Rev. Samuel Atkins Eliot, D.D., LL.D.

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